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# THE ARTS IN GREECE

## Three Essays

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TO THE MEMORY OF  
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## CONTENTS

			PAGE
PREFACE	..	..	vii
I.—THE DANCE	..	..	I
II.—MUSIC	..	..	37
III.—PAINTING	..	..	75

## PREFACE

INSENSIBLY we have diverged from the principles that guided the Greeks through life, and the traditions of the arts which we have inherited from them have slowly been altered and falsified. Moreover the caprice of language has changed the meaning of many of the terms of art, and to the Greeks the words music, colour, and dancing, had a very different signification from that which they now convey to us. This book is an attempt to state some ancient principles again, and to show how it was that to the Greeks music was the music of words and not the music of instruments ; how their painting depended on the beauty of line and not the beauty of colour ; how dancing was not a mere form of exercise but a form of mental expression using the body as its medium. In each one of the arts here discussed there is a vital difference between Greek and modern conceptions ; and the difference is not always to our advantage. In art at least it is perpetually necessary to go back to the fountain head, and even in social morals we have still something to learn. As Sir Henry Maine said, " Except the blind forces of Nature, nothing moves in this world which is not Greek in origin " ; and no one can neglect with impunity the source from which so much of what is really valuable in our civilisation comes.

The modern mind, in art as in all the other

paths of life, attempts too much and wastes its efforts on the unessential. The devices that we regard as marks of intellectual and artistic progress are often but palliatives invented to disguise a central weakness. In music, painting, and the drama we see everywhere the signs of effort and insecurity. Our artists are constantly endeavouring to conquer difficulties of their own making, and for them art has become a long struggle. For this disease a study of Greek life in all its aspects is the best cure. A simple thing well done without effort : such was the Greek's artistic ideal. In music they did without our wealth of instruments, in painting without our range of colours, in drama without our scenery and crowd of actors. And in simplicity they found strength. A lyric of Sappho, a vase of Douris, a speech of Euripides ; these are the models that our musicians, painters and dramatists should keep before them if they would escape from that spirit of restlessness which since the Renaissance has been the bane of art.

# I

## THE DANCE

*“ From harmony, from heavenly harmony,  
This universal frame began.”*

“ ARS una, mille species ” ; one single art includes a myriad of forms. The saying is trite but it is true ; never more true than when applied to that primary art which we know as the Dance. This unity of the arts was deeply realized in ancient Greece. Modern convention, following Lessing as its prophet and, as usual exaggerating the prophet’s doctrine, succeeded for a time in raising barriers between one art and another : the rebels against convention are now struggling to break down the barriers and to reach again the Greek ideal.

The common basis for every art is rhythm, and rhythmical movement is the earliest form of artistic expression. Music may be used as an accompaniment to emphasize the rhythmic action, words may be added to increase the effect of musical sound ; but movement comes first. Even the simplest mind appreciates its charm : hence the universal appeal of the picture palace. The dance, as the Greeks understood it, was the supreme form of this natural art and the modern revivals of the Greek method are of the highest

interest: they are living music and approach, as nearly as may be, to the real spirit of Greece.

Wherever order reigned, there for a Greek was the kingdom of the nine muses, each in her own sphere. The ordered word was the music of poetry, the choral and the epic, the convivial song and the love lyric, where the artist was inspired by Polyhymnia and Calliope, Euterpe and Erato. Then came the music of the stage and its ordered action, now gay with the smile of Thalia, now tragic with Melpomene's frown. Urania and Clio were members of the same company, the one seeking out the rhythmic movements of the stars and bringing mathematics into union with music, the other telling the tragic story of men's life; a tale where harmony and order rule as plainly as in any other of the nine domains. But chief of all was the music of ordered movement, where Terpsichore is queen of the dance, and draws soldier, athlete, actor and musician all beneath her sway.

The nine were sisters together, and it is only from lack of imagination that we do not now naturally connect astronomy, mathematics and history with music: in other words, that two of these arts have lost and the other is losing the close connection they once had with literature. The most imaginative of the Greek philosophers thought otherwise, when he said to the young literary aspirant, "Let no one come to me without mathematics"; and the most scientific of Greek historians was not afraid to plan his narrative on the lines of a tragedy, with the Athenian people as hero and Chance as the guiding spirit

of the play. It is true that even in Greece Urania and Clio often stood apart ; but the other seven sisters went hand in hand, and in Greek music rhythmic words, rhythmic action and rhythmic movement made one harmonious whole.

Of all the muses Terpsichore had the widest domain, and the dance served as the connecting link between art and life. It bridged the gap between music and gymnastic, the two divisions of formal education among the Greeks, so that with them the musician and the athlete were the same person. Rhythmical and graceful movements were thought to train mind and body alike, and, as we see by the vase paintings, the youngest children were taught the principles of the correct carriage of the body and the simple laws of motion. Order, discipline, and measure are the ideas that lie at the root of Greek dancing and their educational value was, as is natural, highly appreciated by states like Sparta and men like Plato. " Movement is natural to the young of all creatures," says the philosopher, in the *Laws*, " but animals have no perception of order in movement. On men alone the gods have bestowed the pleasurable sense of harmony and rhythm. Education is first given to us through Apollo and the Muses : the uneducated man is he who has not been well trained in the choric dance, the educated is he who has received adequate training." It is on Platonic doctrine that the Dalcroze and similar systems base their higher claims—" Through the physical body eurythmy, the expression of the symmetry hidden within the soul, is awakened into being ; by the dance gymnastic reciprocal harmony of

soul and body is attained. All the life of man needs rhythm and orderly adaptation : by bringing our whole organism under the educative influence of harmony we become ourselves finished products of harmony."

In educational theory, ancient and modern, the dance plays no mean part and it entered largely into all those national systems of Greek medicine which had for their object to maintain health rather than to cure disease. A Greek refused to grow old before his time and was not discharged from the army until he was sixty. Dancing was one of the chief means used for keeping the limbs vigorous and supple, and even in his old age Socrates was accustomed to spend part of the morning in practising his steps. As he says in Xenophon's *symposium* "In dancing no part of the body is left idle, neck, legs, or hands. All get some exercise and so the whole body is put in better condition." It is gentle exercise also, he thinks, and does not unduly strain and develope one organ, as some gymnastic exercises occasionally do. The long distance runners for example have stout legs but poor shoulders, boxers stout shoulders and poor legs. Dancing is suitable for every age and every time, and needs no special apparatus.

While the dance served to keep men well in peace it was also used to train them for war, and the connection between dancing and military service, to us strange enough, is well attested in ancient Greece. Gymnastic had for its main purpose the creation of the strength necessary for a soldier ; but strength is useless unless

accompanied by a certain measure of agility ; and this was secured by the dance. The pyrrhic dance was therefore part of the ordinary soldier's training at Athens and Sparta. Fully armed with spear helmet and shield, the young warrior, as we see him on the lovely Petrograd vase, danced to the music of the double flute and showed his teacher that he was able to wield his weapons not only effectively, but, what the Greeks esteemed as equally important, with due regard to grace and rhythm. All the movements of a real combat were practised in the measure : advance and retire, right and left incline, attack with sword and lance, escape from the enemy by a sudden leap or by crouching close to the ground. Usually two dancers faced one another in all these manoeuvres and the pyrrhic, like our bayonet exercise, was commonly taught to soldiers in pairs. But it could also be danced in combination. A full set of pyrrhic dancers, men, youths and boys, forty-eight in all, competed at the Panathenaea and the Festival of the Dioscuri at Sparta and we know that, like the musical ride in our military tournaments, this pyrrhic competition was among the most popular of all the events.

The pyrrhic may be called a musical drill with arms : the Spartan *gymnopaediae*—"naked education"—were exercises of much the same character but without arms. They were peculiar to Sparta and always attracted the wondering attention of the Athenians, for girls were allowed to compete publicly in them with men. The movements of the wrestling school and the gymnasium were harmonised to develope all the

grace and vigour of which men and women's bodies are capable, and some of the greatest poets, Pindar, Alcman, Tyrtaeus, composed the music to which these dances and the marching exercises that went with them were performed.

Here, as always in the Greek dance, the movements of the body combined with the sounds of instrumental and vocal melody to produce a real music, such as M. Jaques-Dalcroze is striving now again to reach, and there can be no doubt that his system of eurhythmics is a genuine attempt to get back to the earliest form of art. The task is difficult and implies a conscious effort ; for the art of to-day is built upon the ruins of the art of the past, and the importance of dancing in the history of artistic development has been too often forgotten.

The music of the voice had in classical Greece already obscured the earlier music of the body, even as with us the practice of instrumental music has obscured the music that was based on the melody of words and the laws of metre. To realise the vital part that dancing played in the progress of art we must turn to the most impartial and unalterable of all evidence, the evidence of language.

“ Melody,” “ harmony,” “ rhythm,”—indeed nearly all the words that ancient or modern theorists use in music—are borrowed from the language of the dance. It is not too much to say the special vocabulary of the art of sound was transferred bodily from the vocabulary of the art of motion, often suffering, as was inevitable, a somewhat violent change of meaning in the pro-

cess. *μέλος*, for example, from which “melody” derives means simply “a limb”; usually in the plural and of the lower limbs, the legs. From the meaning “a limb in motion,” “a fling,” its musical sense developed. So with the three words *ἀρμονία*, *ρυθμός*, *τρόπος*, from which come “harmony,” “rhythm,” and “modes” in music: they all have a similar history and may all be illustrated visually by the junction of two lines thus *T*. *τρόπος* was “a turn” of the limbs; *ρυθμός* “a joint” that part of the body where a limb turns and so renders gestures possible; *ἀρμονία* “the fastening” that keeps two things together, and then the joint between. Foot and finger—*πόντος* and *δακτύλος*—are alike the living instruments of the dancer and by analogy the lifeless instruments of the poet. The dactyl—*the finger foot*—is the earliest of all metrical divisions, while the trochee—*the runner*—and the iambus—*the flinger*—(like our English “catch” and “round”) depend on similar physical associations. Even at the risk of confusion the terms of foot movement were kept to describe the sound of words. *Arsis*, the quiet raising of the foot and *Thesis*, the vigorous return to the ground, take in later writers the exact opposite of their real meaning and signify the vigorous raising and the quiet dropping of the voice.

These are mostly technical terms: but there still remains one word which has been the subject of long controversy. The explanation of Tragedy as “goat song” has everything in its favour: it is plausible, picturesque, and possesses the support of much respectable authority ancient and modern:

but nevertheless it probably is not right. By the same sort of interpretation Beefeaters eschewed pork and mutton and Country Dances were a rustic diversion, the Hyperboreans lived at the back of the north wind and the Amazons lacked a vital part of the female anatomy.

All five theories suffer from the same defect : they are too good to be true. But when sceptics come to suggest an alternative they are in a difficulty. That Tragedy is the song of Dionysus as the god of wild barley—*τράγος* ; that it is the song of Dionysus as the god of luxurious vegetation *τραγάω* ; that it is a song on serious and severe topics *τραχύς* ; none of these quite carry conviction with them. Moreover, they are open to the same objection as is the he-goat derivation : they do not go far enough back. The “ tragic ” song is a later development of the “ tragic ” dance, and to get the first meaning of tragedy we must fix the meaning of *τραγικὸς χόρος*.

As to the changes of meaning that the word “ chorus ” has undergone there is, of course, no doubt. Before it meant the refrain of a song it meant a company of singers ; before that a company of dancers ; before that again, the place where they danced. *χόρος* is the same word as *χόρτος*, *cohors*, *hortus*, and is originally the dance floor marked out for the fixed evolutions of the performers. Of these dance floors there were two kinds. There was the *κύκλιος χόρος* where the lines ran in circles and the dancers moved round, the “ danse rond : ” from which the musical form of dithyramb developed. There was also the *τραγικὸς χόρος* where the dancers were arranged

in lines, *στίχοι*, and moved transversely across the floor, the “contre-danse” : from which the musical form of tragedy developed. What then is the probable meaning of *τραγικός* in this connection ? “Pertaining to a he-goat” is scarcely likely. I would suggest “transverse.”

Etymologically there is no great difficulty. The Indo European TER in its strengthened form TRAG gives us our “drag” and “through” ; the Latin “traho” and “trans.” In Greek it appears so seldom that it is not surprising that the first sense of *τραγικός* was obscured. But it is possible that it occurs in the verbs *τετράνω* and *ταράττω* ; in the nouns *τράγανον* “the transverse membrane of the nostrils” and *θράνος* “the cross-bench of a galley” and in such place names as *Τραγασάι*, *Τραγάια* and *Θράκη* = “Transsylvania, the land *across* the border.”

Of all arts, then, dancing is the oldest, and perhaps its earliest form in Greece was that dedicated to the service of the gods. The ritual dance was an essential part of Greek, as it is of all natural religion ; for modern worship, as General Booth saw, has sadly lost by neglecting the most obvious means of communication between god and man. Gesture is an universal language, understood alike by human and divine, and our clasped hands bent knees and bowed heads are but the poor remnants of the elaborate sign code which the Greeks possessed. They had steps and gestures appropriate to all the emotions of prayer, thanksgiving and sorrow, *répentance* and joy ; the priests knew them ; they were used by worshippers in every temple. Rhea, mother of the gods, first

taught the art to the Corybantes and the Curetes and thereby saved the life of the infant Zeus. Pan and Dionysus, Artemis and Ares, the Nymphs, the Graces, and the Muses, all join together in the rhythm of the dance and the dance is naturally part of the ritual of their worship.

The character of the dance depended upon the god to whom it was addressed. Those divinities who represented the more austere side of religion, Athene and Apollo for example, were approached with the solemn music of the Hyporchema ; the dancers were often closely veiled, their movements were slow and stately. In strong contrast were the dances in honour of Artemis and Dionysus such as were performed by the Maenads and the maidens of Caryae. Here the dance embodied the spirit of ecstasy, of escape from the bonds of everyday life, and each movement of the limbs expressed freedom. But in spite of its wild vigour even the Maenads' dance was governed by the laws of rhythm and M. Emmanuel, using the many representations that we have in ancient art, has been able to retrace the actual steps.

" The dancer first advances rapidly upon her toes, the steps half run, half leap. Then she begins a more vigorous movement and putting all her weight on the left leg she bends her body and right leg violently back, as though foot and shoulder were going to touch. This movement lasts but for an instant : the right foot returns to the ground, the body is straightened and a fresh series of short quick steps begins to be again interrupted by a violent turn of the body back or front."

It must be remembered that even in the wildest movement of the Bacchic dance the Maenads were performing a ceremonial rite. In ancient worship the choir danced and it was the dance rather than

the song that had a definitely religious purpose, even as at the performance of a tragedy it was the dance that emphasised the ritual character of the play. The *Oedipus Tyrannus* should begin with the *Dance of Self-abasement* ; the *Antigone* ends with the *Dance of Death*.

We are too apt to consider the Attic tragedy as a purely literary product, but it was in the theatre that dancing reached its highest level, and most important of all is the link that the dance supplies between music and the drama. The tragic dance comes long before the tragic play ; tragedy and comedy, the Satyric drama and the dithyramb all have their origin in the dance ; and so long as they flourished at Athens Terpsichore might well seem the queen of all the muses. With her the other sisters combined to produce the most typical form of Athenian art and "music" attained perfection in the Theatre of Dionysus where the charm of imaginative poetry, rhythmical movement and dramatic action was blended with the worship of the god. From the variety of the dance came the variety of the drama ; there was the round dance of the dithyramb "turbasia," the square dance of tragedy "emmeleia," there was the "kordax" the single dance of the comic chorus, the "sikinnis" the combined dance of the satyric chorus. The turbasia and the sikinnis were not unlike in character, danced "en rond" with lively gestures and swift bounding movements vigorous but not grotesque. The kordax on the other hand refused no extravagance and far exceeded the limits of modern propriety ; immoderate contortions of thighs and stomach,

violent disturbances of the centre of gravity, uncouth bendings of the knee, sudden somersaults, high-kicks, the splits—all these were parts of its usual routine and it certainly tended to depart from the traditional serenity of the Greek mode. The kordax was the exact opposite of the tragic dance “emmeleia,” “graceful decorum,” which was as well suited to the temple as to the theatre. We may perhaps form some faint idea of its beauty from the early plays of Aeschylus. The Suppliant Maidens, for example, is a dance drama where the dancers still occupy a more important place than the actor. They begin the play with a march in simple anapaestic rhythm before they take up their position on the dancing floor, the orchestra, which they never leave till the end of the play. Their long dances “stasima” with all their gestures and movements were taught them by the poet himself and they were as full of dramatic significance as the words they sang. As an ancient author says:—“The chorus in the dance renders visible the spectacle which the poet describes in his verse.” The evolution of the Attic drama was in the direction of the substitution of words for movement and the later style of Euripides shows the diminished importance of the dance. But even in his last play, the Bacchae, there is one part, that of Agave, which calls for the highest powers of creative dancing. The words of the part as we have them in our texts are comparatively unimportant but it was probably the chief rôle in the play and like the somewhat similar case of the Cassandra in the Agamemnon it would be taken by the chief actor in the troupe.

We may begin now, perhaps, to see how it was that Plato says the Dance was developed among men under the direct guidance of the gods ; how Xenophon compares the order and arrangement of the perfect household to the rhythmic movements of dancers ; how Lucian traces dancing back to the creation of the universe when first the planets and the fixed stars danced together, and makes it coeval with Eros who is the beginning of all things. But we shall never understand the importance of the Dance in Greek life until we divest ourselves of those ideas of clumsy festivity that make us think "a hop" a suitable synonym for the noblest of exercises, and forget all the associations of the Latin word "saltatio." To the Romans dancing meant "jumping with vigour" and they did not usually indulge in the amusement unless they were inebriated—*nemo fere saltat sobrius nisi forte insanit* : of moral, educational, and artistic purpose it had none. We must dismiss from our minds the drunken revelry of a Roman banquet and the trivialities of the modern ball room, where couples interlaced slide about on a polished floor, and remember that to a Greek dancing was an art, and moreover an art of universal application.

Sometimes it was simple like the dances once practised by our May girls with their Jack in the Green or by the Morris men with their ribbons and wands, the art whose naïve methods have been conventionalised in recent years by Miss Allan and Miss Isadora Duncan. Sometimes it was as elaborate as the dancing of Pavlova and Mordkin, Nijinsky and Karsavina, involving years of teach-

ing and muscles specially trained. But unlike the Russian Ballet it was never barbarous. In the Greek dance there was none of that riot of colour noise and gesture which even to us seems somewhat disquieting, although it would probably have exactly hit the taste of Imperial Rome. The Greeks were restrained in all their elaboration and the nearest equivalent that the modern stage can offer to their methods is the delicate art of Adeline Genée, that exquisite compound of Italian fire and Scandinavian ice. Genée's dancing is Greek, and we may be sure that Socrates would have been as grateful to her as he was to the fair lady of whom Xenophon tells us in the *Memorabilia*.

But Genée and Pavlova are professional dancers who have given their whole lives to one division of orchesitic ; among the Greeks the dance in both its aspects, gymnastic and mimetic, was universal, and it is here that we may well take lesson by them. At present we have not even a word in our language for the true art. "Dance" is entirely inadequate ; it suggests too little and too much, and it gives but a faint idea of the meaning of the two nouns which the Greeks used, *Orchesis* and *Choreia* ; the first applied to single dancers the second to performers dancing in company. We borrow our technical terms from the French and misuse the words we have ; "orchestral music" and "choral music" should mean a "pas seul" and a ballet : we have transferred them to the service of the sister art.\* The history of the change of meaning is the history of the decadence of the dance in England.

## II

The figured monuments—statues, painted vases, sculptured reliefs, etc.—give us the pictured image of the Greek dancers as they lived and moved. The rhythm of the poems which almost invariably were sung by the dancers, a vocal music corresponding to our instrumental accompaniment, fix for us the time and cadence of their steps. Finally the texts of such ancient authors as treat of dancing enlighten us on the surroundings and conditions in which the art was carried on. For the practical purposes of the reconstitution of ancient methods the evidence supplied by the actual representation of dancing figures is invaluable and it is upon vase paintings that our chief modern authority, M. Emmanuel, mainly relies, although he checks and confirms his theories of the ancient dance by a close study of the professional training of the French ballet.

To realise fully the knowledge that the rhythm of a vocal accompaniment may give, it is necessary to remember the cardinal fact of Greek music ; that it was vocal rather than instrumental, and that combinations of syllables took the place of our combinations of notes. A correct appreciation of the character of Greek poetry will be as valuable in understanding the laws of the dance as in understanding the laws of metre, for poetry, music and dancing make one inseparable whole.

In literature our material unfortunately is both scanty and late. No ancient author seems to have composed a methodical treatise on the dance corresponding to Aristoxenus' great work on

music and it is from Pollux and the lexicographers of the Byzantine period, Proclus, Hesychius, Suidas, etc., that much of our text-book information comes. The learned Dutchman Meursius, for example, who wrote in 1618 relies chiefly upon their glossaries, and contents himself with a laborious enumeration in alphabetical order of the two hundred different dances whose names he had unearthed : the Germans, Krause, Buchholtz and Flach are not much more useful. And yet there is one ancient writer, who, on the dance as on nearly every other branch of social affairs, does give us a mass of miscellaneous information, and in the pages of Athenaeus we may, at least faintly, realise the universal influence that the dance had on Greek life. Of Athenaeus himself we know little, for though he is lavish in anecdotes of other men he tells us almost nothing of his own life. He was a Greek born at Naucratis in Egypt towards the end of the second century of our era, and he lived in Rome after the death of the Emperor Commodus ; with that our information ends. But he was the most learned of that wonderful group who in the second and third centuries made literature a profession. Galen is more scientific, Lucian a greater writer, but in abundance of knowledge and breadth of reading Athenaeus takes the first place. His great work the *Deipnosophists* (commonly mistranslated the " Banquet of the Learned," although the word rather means " Experts at dining " than " Experts at dinner " and is equivalent to our " Epicures Club ") unfortunately now survives only in an abridged form, even though in its present shape

it extends to over 1,000 closely printed pages. Originally in thirty-one books it was reduced in Byzantine times to fifteen and these fifteen were again condensed and shortened. To the final epitome the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 11th, and 15th, books of our present manuscript belong ; the other ten representing the second and fuller revision.

In all antiquity there is no collection of general information which can be compared in richness to the *Deipnosophists*. On every page under a mass of gossip and trivial detail interesting facts abound. It purports in the form of a conversation to give the topics discussed at a banquet which has lately taken place at the house of a noble Roman, Laurentius, and the characters are introduced with some dramatic skill. There is the magnificent host, a man of learning who guides the conversation from subject to subject, age to age, and country to country until at the end there is scarcely a topic unmentioned. Among the guests are the great names of Galen, the chief scientist, and Ulpian, the most learned lawyer of the age, and after them a host of smaller men including of course the indispensable cynics, satirists by profession, buffoons at need. The nearest analogy of Athenaeus in English literature is Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, and it would be difficult to say which of the two miscellanies is the most captivating. But Athenaeus has a great advantage in range of subject, for he deals not with one single emotion but with all social life and he extends his survey over some ten centuries. Like most of the Greeks of his day he continually recurs to the great age of his

country's glory in the fifth century and of Rome and Latin literature he tells us very little. Nor does he concern himself much with the formal politics into which Greek history too often degenerates and from some of our most familiar Greek authors he scarcely quotes. Demosthenes, for example, supplies only sixteen citations, Diphilus the comic poet nearly a hundred: Theopompos is quoted sixty-four times, Thucydides five. The social life that the great historian neglects is Athenaeus' chief subject: of music and banquets, of theatres and dancing, of wine and food, of courtesans and jesters he discourses at length. The luxury of the Greek cities through the ages, Sybaris, Tarentum, Miletus, Alexandria under the Ptolemies, Antioch under the Romans, is illustrated by countless anecdotes and by such long descriptive passages as the account of the Feast of Caranus, Hiero's ship, and the Procession of Ptolemy Philadelphus. The talk covers the widest possible range, although the subject of edibles has a somewhat larger share of attention than any other topic. But dancing and music are constantly recurring and one long passage is concerned almost entirely with the dance.

“ Music contributes both to the exercise of the body and the keenness of the mind, and that is the reason seemingly why all the Greeks and every foreign nation we know practise it. Damon's pupils at Athens were right when they said songs and dances are a law of nature, whenever the mind is in any way aroused. Gentlemanly and honourable feelings result in honourable dances, feelings that are the opposite of honourable produce dances that are also the opposite. It was this that led to the witty saying of Cleisthenes, tyrant of Sicyon, whereby he gave plain proof of a well-educated mind. The

story goes thus—‘ One of his daughter’s suitors (it was Hippocleides the Athenian) danced in a vulgar fashion and Cleisthenes saw him. Judging apparently that the man’s mind was as vulgar as his dancing, he said to him, “ You have danced away your marriage.” ’ Indeed both in dancing and in walking decorum and grace are good, disorder and vulgarity bad. So originally poets rather than dancing masters arranged the movements of the dance and free born men not slaves took part in it. The gestures were used merely as visible signs of the words that were sung, and the principles that guide a manly gentleman were always strictly observed : they were called not dances but dance accompaniments. If anyone in his gestures disregarded the rhythm of the music or if while taking part in a chorus his dancing did not correspond with the words, he was considered deserving of censure. So Aristophanes (—or perhaps it is Plato in his play *Preparations*, as Chamaeleon says—) remarks :—

“ Once on a time we dancers had, a fair and noble sight,  
To-day like stocks the actors stand and bawl with all their  
might.”

“ The type of dancing that was used then in the dramatic chorus was graceful and magnificent and representative, as it were, of the motions of men under arms. So Socrates in his poems says that the best dancers are also the best fighters,

‘ Those who in worship of the dance the gods obey  
They when the battle comes are foremost in the fray.’

“ Choral dancing in those days was practically a military exercise and a display not merely of general discipline but especially of bodily fitness.

“ Amphion of Thespiae in the second book of his treatise, *The Temple of the Muses on Helicon*, says that on Helicon there are elaborate dances performed by boys and he quotes the following ancient verse inscription :—

‘ Bacchiadas of Sicyon a dancer once was I  
And with the Muses’ aid I taught to men my artistry  
My flautist came from Phialae, good Anacus his name.  
Now to the nymphs of Sicyon this offering, prize and  
fame.’

"Cepheasias the flute player also was quite right in his criticism. One of his pupils was beginning a loud tune on his flute and trying to play as loudly as possible. Cepheasias gave him a rap on the knuckles and said, 'Goodness does not consist in greatness but greatness in goodness.' Of the ancient mode of dancing we have some memorials in the statues left to us by craftsmen of old, and we see in them that the art of gesticulation was once more carefully practised than it is now, and that for a reason like Cepheasias. Even in the dance men sought after such movements as befit an honourable gentleman and they made 'well done' include 'greatly done.' The movements of these gesture dances they transferred to the dramatic chorus, and from the chorus they were transferred once more to the gymnasium. In music and in bodily fitness they sought an exemplar of courage, and with a view to motion under arms they practised gymnastics to the accompaniment of song. This is the origin of the various steps called Pyrrhic and all such military kind of dancing, with their different titles—the Cretan 'Quick-step,' for example, and the 'Front-facc.'

"The dance called the 'Shake-off'—of which Cratinus speaks in his *Nemesis* as well as Cephisodorus in the *Amazons* and Aristophanes in the *Centaur* and many others also—this was afterwards called 'The Kneading dance.' It was danced by a number of women together and these women I have been told were called 'The Kneaders.' Some dances are comparatively sedate, some are rapid and in some the steps are more simple than in others. There are the dactyl-dances, where one long step is followed by two short, the iambic dance where one short step is followed by a long and the Molossian harmony where three long steps are taken. There is the Kordax, the Sicinnis and the Persian dance. Then we have a Phrygian dance called the Nibatismos, a Thracian dance the Colabrismos and finally the Telesias. This latter is a Macedonian dance of which Ptolemy's men took advantage to murder Alexander the brother of Philip (as Marsyas tells us in the 3rd book of his *Macedonian History*). There are also some dances of an hysterical character—the 'Dish-carrier,' the 'Poker-and-tongs,' and the 'Shrieker.' And

in everyday life there was a dance called 'The Offering.' As people danced it they used to repeat these words —

- A. Where is my lovely parsley, say ?  
My violets, roses, where are they ?
- B. Your parsley, roses, violets fair,  
You see before you. All are here.

" The people of Syracuse have a special dance—performed in honour of Artemis with a flute accompaniment, and there was an Ionian dance called ' The Banquet ' : they also practised a third convivial measure called ' The telling of the News.' There is again another dance which is styled ' The World-conflagration,' the steps showing how everything may take the shape of burning fire.

" Then there are the comic dances the ' Pestle and mortar,' ' the Kneading trough,' ' the Shake-off ' ' the Parade ' ; and besides these ' The Grimace,' dance, the ' Spilling of the flour,' the ' Way to pay off debts,' the ' Owl and the Lion,' the ' A.B.C.,' and the ' Red-King's ' dance. They also danced with a flute accompaniment, the ' Boatswain's hornpipe ' and ' the Plank.' Among the postures used in dancing there is the sword step, the basket step, the cock's comb, the look out and the watcher. The watcher was a posture to be used by those who were looking a long way off, the tips of their fingers making an arch over their eyebrows. Aeschylus mentions it in his play, *The Spectators*.

" ' These ancient watcher gestures,' he says, and Eupolis in *The Flatterers* remarks :

" ' He has the true cock's comb walk and he reeks of sesame.' Other figures are the ' Poker-and-tongs ' the ' Double kick,' ' the Target,' the ' Hand-down, the ' Hand-up,' the ' Two foot,' the ' Touch-wood,' the ' Elbow hold,' the ' Basket,' and ' The Top.' There is also a dance called Telesias, a martial figure deriving its name from one Telesius who was the first person to dance it in armour, as Hippagoras tells us in the first book of his *Carthaginian Constitution*. The dance of the satyric drama, as Aristocles says in his first book on Dancing, is called Sikinnis and the satyrs Sikinnists. Some say that a foreigner called Sikinnios invented it, others declare that this

Sikinnos was a Cretan by birth. As Aristoxenus says the Cretans are all dancers. Scamon in his first book *On Inventions*, says the dance is called 'Sikinnis,' from the shakes it involves and Theusippus was the first person to dance it.

"Movement of the feet is a prior invention to movement of the hands. The ancients exercised their feet more than their hands in games and in hunting: the Cretans are fond of hunting and therefore they are swift footed.

"There are some who say that the word Sikinnis is merely a poetic inversion of 'kinetic,' for it is a very swift dance as the satyrs perform it. This sort of dancing makes an attempt to portray character and so it has no slow movements. In ancient times every form of satyric play consisted entirely of dance and song, as indeed did tragedy at that time: so there were no actors in either tragedy or satyr play. There are three kinds of dances used in dramatic composition, the tragic, the comic and the satyric dance. Similarly in lyric composition there are three—the pyrrhic, the gymnopædia, and the hyporcheme. The pyrrhic resembles the satyric dance inasmuch as both are performed in quick time. The pyrrhic, however, would seem to be a military dance, for the boys that dance it carry arms. Swiftness is necessary in war both for pursuit and when you are beaten that you 'may run away and live to fight another day.' The gymnopædia is like that form of tragic dance which is called 'the Harmonious'; in both serious gravity is a prominent feature. The hyporcheme is akin to the comic dance called kordax: both are of a jocular type. Aristoxenus says that the pyrrhic took its name from a man of Spartan birth called Pyrrhicus, and that even now Pyrrhicus is a common Spartan name. The martial character of this dance shows plainly that the invention was due to a Spartan—for the Spartans are a warlike race and even their children learn by heart those marching songs which are also sometimes called Songs of Arms. The Spartans themselves repeat the poems of Tyrtaeus when they are on a campaign and in all their movements obey the laws of rhythm. Philochorus says that when the Spartans had beaten the Messenians by the help of Tyrtaeus' leadership, they introduced the custom of singing Tyrtaeus' poems as solos after dinner as soon as the paean had been chanted:

the General acts as judge and gives a piece of meat to the best singer as a prize. The pyrrhic, however, is not preserved now among any other Greek nation : its disappearance coincides with the cessation of war : in Sparta alone it survives, being regarded as part of military training, and everyone above the age of five years in Sparta learns to dance it.

“ With us the pyrrhic is a variety of the Dionysiac dance and it is now more gentle than it was in its ancient form. The dancers carry wands instead of spears and they only point reeds at one another. They have torches also and represent in the dance the adventures of Dionysus in India and with Pentheus. For the pyrrhic beautiful music with a vigorous rhythm is required. The *gymnopaedia* resembles the dance which the ancients called ‘ the Fling-off,’ for the boys who dance it are always naked. They perform certain rhythmical movements together with gestures of the hands which represent the action of flinging, and by similar movements of the feet they portray the spectacles that are seen in a boxing match or in a wrestling school. The turns of the dance are called the ‘ Grape-carrier ’ and the ‘ Bacchanal ’ so that this dance also has a reference to Dionysus. Aristoxenus says that the ancients when practising the *gymnopaedia* always ended with a pyrrhic dance before they entered the theatre. The pyrrhic is also called the dance of gestures. In the *hyporcheme* the chorus dances while it is singing. At any rate Bacchylides says : “ ‘ This is no time for tarrying or delay,’ and Pindar : ‘ A troop of Spartan maidens ’ ; for in Pindar’s poem the dancers are Spartans and the *hyporcheme* is a dance in which both men and women take part. The best ‘ turns ’ in music are those which can be expressed also in dance movements, the *Processional* for example and the *Missive*—also called the *Virginal*—and such like. Some hymns were represented by dancing, some were not, and the same is the case with *paeans*.

“ Among foreigners as among Greeks there are good dances and there are bad. The Greek *kordax* is a vulgar dance ; the ‘ *Dance Harmonious* ’ is decorous : it is like the Arcadian ‘ *Dance of the Crow* ’ and the Sicyonian dance ‘ *The Rover*.’ There is also in Ithaca a *Rover* dance as Aristoxenus tells us in the first book of his treatise ‘ *On Composition*.’

“ Concerning dancing for the present I have said enough.”

This is the longest single passage in Athenaeus dealing solely with dancing but it by no means exhausts the information he possesses. The song and the gesture-dance always in Greece went together, in ancient times, as they do to-day, and when our author is treating of music he gives a further catalogue of dance songs. He tells us of the Dances of the Revellers, one in single and one in triple time, the Dance of the Herdsman and the Dance of the Satyrs. There are National dances, Spartan, Sicilian, Cretan, Ionian, and Mantinean: dances that are forms of athletics and required acrobatic skill—the ball dance, the somersault dance and the clapping dance; dances for special occasions—the War dance, the Phallic dance and the Dance of Triumph, and fantastic dances whose names suggest boisterous humour—the Tickler, the Squeaker, and the Clown. Then there are the song dances with which working folk lightened their toil; some for men, the miller's dance, the reapers' dance, the dance of the weavers and the dance of the bath-men: others for women, the dance of the spinning women and the wool workers, the nurses and the cooks. In all these dances words, music and gesture made one inseparable whole as they did in those folk songs and village plays which, both in ancient and modern Greece, play so great a part in the life of the people. On the François vase of the sixth century B.C., we see Theseus with a band of youths and maidens hand-in-hand dancing the Crane dance to celebrate his victory over the Minotaur. And Athenaeus gives us the words of two other simple dramas; the Dance of the Crow and the Dance of the

Swallow, as they had been played from time immemorial in Colophon and Rhodes. The words alone now remain : we must picture for ourselves the bands of children disguised with black and white feathers as they dance from door to door and collect their doles of cake and wine, while with merry gestures they mime, now the swift flight of the swallow, now the fierce attack of a robber band.

The swallow comes winging  
His way to us here !  
Fair hours is he bringing,  
And a happy new year !  
White and black  
Are his belly and back.  
Give him welcome once more,  
With figs from your store,  
With wine in its flasket,  
And cheese in its basket,  
And eggs—ay, and wheat if we ask it.  
Shall we go or receive ? yes, we'll go, if you'll give ;  
But, if you refuse us, we never will leave.  
We'll tear up the door,  
And the lintel and floor ;  
And your wife, if you still demur—  
She is little and light—we will come to-night  
And run away e'en with her.  
But if you will grant  
The presents we want,  
Great good shall come of it,  
And plenty of profit !  
Come, throw open free  
Your doors to the swallow !  
Not old men but children we  
And the swallow says " Open to me. "

Here we have the first form of the mime, an art as natural to Greece and Italy as fresco painting,

and one as difficult to transplant to northern lands. A more elaborate dance, not unlike the miniature dramas that modern travellers find still performed in the villages of Northern Greece, is described by Xenophon in the *Anabasis* and quoted from him by Athenaeus. The scene is the banquet given by Seuthes, the Thracian, where—“ After libations were made the Thracians danced in arms to the music of the flute, leaping high and waving their swords. And at last one of them struck another so that it seemed to every one that the man was wounded. And he fell down in true artistic fashion and all the audience shouted. And the other stripped him of his arms and went out singing ‘ the Sitalcas.’ And other Thracians carried out his antagonist as if he were dead : but really there was nothing the matter with him.”

After this the Magnesians dance “ the Sowing of the Crops,” as follows :—

“ One man, having laid aside his arms, is sowing and driving a yoke of oxen, constantly looking round as if he were afraid. Then comes up a robber ; but the sower snatches up his arms and fights in defence of his team in regular time to the music of the flute. And at last the robber, having bound the man, carries off the team. But sometimes the sower conquers the robber and then binding him alongside his oxen he ties his hands behind him and drives him forward.”

Then a Mysian performs a shield dance, turning somersaults with a cavalry buckler on either arm. He is followed by the Arcadians who dance in martial procession and finally the amusements of the banquet conclude with the appearance of a Greek professional, a lady who performs the sword dance.

## III

Dancing, ancient or modern, in the proper sense of the word, consists of at least two separate elements, movement and gesture. The first is connected with gymnastics and in it the legs play the most important, though not the sole part : in the second their place is taken by the arms, hands and fingers. The movements of the dance—*φόραι*—were taught in the Greek gymnasia and formed part of a liberal education : the gestures—*σχήματα*—were reserved for professional dancers and though they might be used by amateurs they were, strictly speaking, a technical study. We have the three stages in Xenophon's Symposium. Socrates knows and practises the movements of the dance but he knows nothing of the gestures. Charmides, whose education is incomplete, does not know the movements and has to be content with certain gymnastic exercises. The professional dancer from Syracuse alone is equally well versed in gymnastic movement and gesture. Herein lies one of the greatest differences between ancient and modern methods. Our professional dancers confine themselves almost exclusively to the movements of the dance and depend on strength of leg muscle for most of their effects : of arms and hands they make little or no use and of gesture they often have no idea.

A Greek danced not merely with his feet, but with his arms, his thighs, and all his body : *χέρσι λαλεῖν*, “to speak with your hands,” *saltare oculis*, “to dance with your eyes,” as Greek and Latin have it. He was trained to

express the movements of the mind by the movements of his limbs, and dancing was an intellectual as well as a physical exercise. The dance has long ceased to be an English art and it will be difficult to revive it in its true sense, for the habits of many centuries have trained us to repress, rather than express, our feelings.

Whether we gain or lose as a nation by our reticence of emotion is a doubtful question, but expression is an indispensable part of an actor's equipment and our actors generally fail in this, the first essential of their art. Even a fourth-rate Italian actor may put them to shame, and those middle-aged playgoers who remember how Paul Martinetti could run through all the gamut of tragic and comic emotion in dumb show will smile to-day to see our *jeune premier* who can make no better use of his hands than to thrust them deep into his pockets.

The ancients were not so foolish as to neglect the most effective agent of expression, and even such a prosaic writer as Quintilian grows enthusiastic over the powers of gesture :

“ The number of movements of which the hand is capable ” —he says “ is incalculable : they are as many as words themselves. The hands can almost speak : they demand, and promise, summon and dismiss, threaten and entreat. They express horror, fear, joy, sadness, hesitation, confession, repentance, moderation, abundance, number, time. Have they not the power to excite and calm, to implore, approve and admire, to express all the signs of modesty ? Do they not take the place of pronouns and adverbs to designate places or persons ? There are gestures also whereby the hand in imitation makes us understand a thing. To show that one person is ill it imitates the physician feeling the pulse ; to

show that another is a musician it puts the fingers in the position of a harp player."

These conventional signs — *δειξεις* — were the last development of the dance and it is doubtful whether they were commonly used before Roman times ; but in conjunction with the movements and gestures of the earlier art they made the dancer independent of words and enabled him, if he were sufficiently skilful, to express every shade of feeling without using his voice. Modern schools of dancing, the great academies of the French and Russian ballet, for example, have consistently neglected the teaching of gesture and as a result have turned an art where individual expression had full play into a science working by fixed rules and involving a long and arduous apprenticeship. Under the French system the neophyte is taken at the age of eight and has a daily lesson for two years before he or she passes out of the elementary stage where all steps are practised with the help of a wooden bar fixed on the side of a wall. Each grade of progress, the Beginner's class, the "Quadrilles," the "Coryphées," and the "Premiers Sujets" can only be entered after a searching examination, and twenty years may well be spent in this preliminary training. But all these exercises are devised entirely to keep the muscles supple and to strengthen the legs, which in modern dancing are all important : the arms are regarded as purely decorative, the hands and fingers play a passive rôle. In most cases it is fair to say that the result of this long training is hardly commensurate with the pains taken. Like much modern effort it is highly elaborate but hardly

worth doing : it excites surprise and a sort of admiration, but it gives no permanent pleasure.

The methods of professional training in Greece were very different, although in some respects the actual practise of dancing was the same as that followed to-day. The Greeks for example, used all the five positions of the foot flat upon the ground : they danced upon the extreme tip of the toes ; they kept the toes pointed downwards and avoided showing the sole of the foot ; they knew and practised the pirouette, the entrechat, and even the Russian knee dance. But they never troubled to acquire the mechanical precision which our long training gives. A modern dancer tries to realise exactly certain movements definitely fixed by rule. Each turn and twist, its speed and extent, is determined beforehand to the fraction of a second and an inch ; the formulae of the dance are invariable and the least infraction of the established convention is regarded as a crime. The Greek on the other hand indulged his own fancy and did not fear to be grotesque. He leaped and gambolled, he flung his head back and he bent himself to and fro ; every method of bodily expression was pressed into his service.

The modern dance shows the human body in all the grace of movement and in all the perfection of its form, but it rejects the methods of nature and is merely a kind of artificial gymnastics. It forbids a dancer to walk naturally ; it imposes on all his movements certain conventional laws which seem to be based upon an idea of decorative ornament, and it leaves very little scope for initiative, intelligence, or invention. In Greece on the other

hand, all the intellectual qualities that the dancer possessed were called into play ; he performed before spectators who expected from him something more than mere pleasure of the eyes, and an expressive gesture was held more important than a graceful movement. If he wished to express soft emotions he moved softly, but grace was not his chief care. Any movement was permitted him, supple or grotesque, graceful or brusque, provided only that it expressed the thought he wished to convey.

Thus Greek training was far more intellectual than ours. The gymnastic formulae which the dancer learned from his trainer were not so much movements as signs taking the place of words. They could not be systematised and reduced to any final shape, but were rather modified at the wish of the dancer and lent themselves to every shade of mimetic expression.

This inventive quality was inherent, as we have seen, in the Greek dance from the beginning but in the revival of Greek culture, which marked the first century of the Roman Empire, the element of mimicry took a sudden importance and dancing in this new shape superseded in popularity all other forms of imitative art, even as imaginative prose began just about the same time to become the favourite medium in literature. The pantomime and the romance are the last inventions of the Greek genius, and they quickly became as universal as the novel and the cinema have become with us. All the other arts had already been brought to rustic Latium : as a final gift captive Greece devised these two new forms.

\* The methods of dramatic gesture were not strange to the Roman people who had a natural genius for mimicry and the *Cantica* of a Roman comedy which were performed by two actors—a singer and a mime working in unison—were based on the same idea as pantomime. But as a form of art it is correct to ascribe the invention to two Greeks, Pylades and Bathyllus, both freedmen in the service of the Emperor Augustus. Bathyllus, who attempted to represent the imaginative themes of comedy by the medium of the dance, was the less successful and after his death had few successors. Pylades preferred "tragic" subjects, *i.e.* the stories of the Greek mythology which had the great advantage of being known in outline to the audience and on this groundwork he built up an art which lasted for centuries and was the delight of the whole Roman world.

He made for his subject a kind of pictorial melodrama, visualising the old legends by a method not unlike that followed by the artists of our cinema theatres. The stories chosen were usually of the atrociously pathetic "genre," such as the *Sorrows of Niobe*, the *Madness of Hercules*, the *Death of Orpheus*,<sup>1</sup> the tale of Thyestes who devoured his children or of Agave who killed her son. Almost equally popular were the scandals of illegitimate love in which Ionian literature abounded—the amours of Ares and Aphrodite, of Leda, Ganymede, Danae, and Europa. The

<sup>1</sup> Quite possibly it was the *Death of Orpheus*, the chaste prophet whose head was torn from his body by the women of Thrace, that Salome "danced" before Herod.

libretto was a bald patchwork from ancient authors and had no intrinsic merit : “ the song is made for the dance, not the dance for the song,” said Libanius, and the words were held in little account. Literary qualities were not required in the Roman theatre, and the merit of the dance was that it introduced some conception of an art to a profoundly inartistic people. The poetry, good or bad, was sung not by one voice, but by a band of gaily dressed choristers in the midst of an elaborate stage setting, the costumes and scenery being magnificent enough to suit the most exacting taste. An orchestra of wind, string and brass instruments accompanied and drowned the words, and a special device, the *scabellum*, a sort of wooden clapper worked by the foot, was used to keep the rhythm of the music in exact unison with the gestures of the chief dancer on whom all attention centred.

The great pantomimes, men such as Pylades, Hylas, and Paris, enjoyed a world-wide fame and the panegyric of Lucian in his treatise *On the Dance* under its humourous exaggeration contained a substantial basis of reality. A first-rate dancer needed the highest qualities of mind and body : he must have memory, sensibility, shrewdness, rapidity of conception, tact, and judgment : he must be capable of discerning good music and rejecting bad. Like Calchas in Homer, he should know “ all that is, that was, that shall be,” and faithfully to represent his subject he must make plain all that might be obscure ; clearness in his case depending solely on clearness of gesticulation. His work must be one harmonious whole,

avoiding exaggeration, perfect in balance and proportion, and based on human sympathy. The spectator must see in the dancer, as in a mirror, the reflection of his own feelings until audience and actor become one.

Bodily qualifications, Lucian proceeds, are equally important. A great dancer must be perfectly proportioned ; he must neither be immoderately tall nor dwarfishly short : not too fleshy (a most unpromising quality in one of his profession) nor cadaverously thin. His vigorous movements—turn and twist, bend and spring—afford at once a gratifying spectacle to the beholder and a wholesome training to the performer. Indeed no gymnastic exercise can equal the dance for beauty and for the uniform development of the physical powers ; it gives agility, suppleness, and elasticity as well as solid strength. But the chief dancer beside these qualities of memory and strength had to be a man of extraordinary versatility, for he alone embodied all the personages in the dance drama. A quick change of mask and costume helped the illusion but the dancer chiefly relied on change of gesture. Paris, for example, the favourite of Nero, would at times dispense even with the aid of chorus and orchestra. Time beaters, flutes, singers were ordered to preserve a strict silence ; and the dancer left to his own resources would represent the whole story of Ares and Aphrodite. In turn he would be the tell-tale Sun, and crafty Hephaestus, the Gods surrounding the captured lovers, the blushing Aphrodite and the guilty Ares. It is not to be wondered at if even stern philosophers cried out in admiration of such art :—

“ This is not seeing, but hearing and seeing together : 'tis as if your hands were tongues ”—

“ *tot linguae quam membra viro* ”

Lucian gives us the most lively appreciation of the new art, but every author of the Empire agrees with him in praise of pantomime, and by the end of the second century it had become, as he says, “ a captivity of ear and eye, of body and soul.” It was a wonderful revival : the dance from which the drama in all its forms had sprung now again held sole possession of the stage ; tragedy, comedy, and dithyramb were neglected and forgotten. The earliest of all the Greek arts proved also the most permanent, and just as in Homer King Meriones has “ dancer ” for his proudest title, so fourteen centuries later a dancing girl Theodora became Empress of the Roman world.



## II

### MUSIC

*“Blest pair of Sirens, pledges of heav’n’s joy,  
Sphere-born harmonious sisters, Voice and Verse.”*

#### I

To the Greeks of the great age the word “music” meant something very different from what it did to the Alexandrians, the Romans, or ourselves ; and the meaning of the word, if rightly apprehended, gives the key to the vital difference between the classical and the modern idea. *‘H μουσική*—music—was to the Athenians all literature, the Latin “humaner arts,” and their education, was composed of “music” and “gymnastic”; “science” in the modern sense of the word not being invented till our own great days. Moreover, literature was not so much written books as spoken words ; the Muses were the daughters of memory, and education largely consisted of learning by heart the sound of great literature ; the education of Ruskin in fact, who every day *said* his chapter of the Bible at his mother’s knee. Memory is at the very centre of the Greek idea of music and education, and memory work is still the foundation of all rational systems of training children.

The history of music divides into two periods, the first beginning with the primeval man beating rhythmically upon the ground, proceeding through the early civilisations of the eastern empires and culminating in Greece during the fifth century B.C. The Romans, in carrying on the Greek tradition, attached more importance to instruments than the Greeks allowed, but their musical system was the same, and this music shared in the general eclipse of all the arts that followed on the final decay of their empire. Then in the darkest period of the dark ages, about 900 A.D., music takes a new form. Who it was that first discovered part-singing is unknown : probably it is the joint invention of many nameless monks working painfully through many years ; but it is that discovery of plural melody that makes modern music differ in essence from the ancient art.

To the Athenians "music" meant firstly the rhythm of musical speech, and then especially lyric poetry with some simple accompaniment of lyre or flute. But after Aristotle, the meaning of the word began to alter, widening in some direction and narrowing in others, so that Aristides Quintilianus, a writer of the first century of our era, is able to subdivide "music" into nine parts : three "technical"—Metric, Rhythmic, and Harmonic, or the studies of poetry, dancing, and composition, conducted on academic lines ; three "practical"—poetry, rhythmic invention, and melody, *i.e.* the actual practice of the three arts, as opposed to their theoretical study ; and lastly three "expository"—singing, acting, and instrumental music.

The last of these sections—instrumental music—had in the time of Aristides become the most important, as we see by the meaning of the Latin “*musica*,” and its derivatives in modern languages where the tendency is to confine the word to the sound of instruments alone. But in the great age this was far from being the case. Music then was almost entirely vocal, and although its medium was sound, it was the sound of words, and not the sound of instruments. Music and literature were identical in all their details: the alphabet was as much the province of the musician as of the grammarian, and a great literary critic like Dionysius of Halicarnassus always thinks of the *sound* of the passages he quotes. In his treatise “*On Literary Composition*,” Dionysius says:—“The science of public oratory is after all a sort of musical science, differing from vocal and instrumental music in degree not in kind. In oratory, too, the words involve melody, rhythm, variety and appropriateness; so that in this case also the ear delights in the melodies, is fascinated by the rhythms, welcomes the variations, and craves always what is in keeping with the occasion. The distinction between oratory and music is simply one of degree.”<sup>1</sup>

The Greeks had very little instrumental music because they had very few musical instruments: and, as is the case with most of the things which the Greeks did not possess, they did not have them because they did not want them. They realised quite clearly that the most perfect of musical instruments is the human voice, and that it is the

<sup>1</sup> Dionysius, *De Comp. Verb.*, ch. xi., trans. Roberts.

function of imperfect mechanical devices of wood and metal to play a secondary and supporting rôle, not to take the chief part in music. They agreed with the old Italian school of operatic composers, Bellini, Donizetti, Rossini—and Verdi, before he became infected with the Wagnerian heresy—to whom music was first and foremost “bel canto.”

But the Greeks, like the modern Italians, had the advantage of possessing a musical language ; a language which it is a pleasure to speak and to hear : not the blurred vowels and the harsh monosyllables of English, nor the nasal sibilants and clipped consonants which too often do duty for French, nor, worst of all, the polysyllabic cacophony into which German can degenerate. Indeed it is the hopeless character of their language which undoubtedly has driven the Germans to the practice of instrumental music. Bach, Mendelssohn, Beethoven, all wrote very little for the voice. Wagner, following Weber, tried to set German words to operatic music ; but the logic of facts was too strong for him, and as he was too patriotic to use Italian words, he covered up his German libretto with elaborate orchestration, and then finds fault with Verdi—who had no reason to be ashamed of the sound of his voice—for using the orchestra like a guitar as a mere accompaniment. Ancient Greek itself has three distinct stages. Take the opening of the Iliad—*μῆνιν ἄειδε, θεά, Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος*—the phrase is pure melody ; but if the words be turned into the trochaic rhythm of the Attic stage—*τὴν δὲ μῆνιν ἄδε, Μοῦσ', Ἀχιλλέως Πηλέιδου*—we hear at once a degeneration of sound, and in the

last stage of prose—δεῖ τὴν μοῦσαν τὸν χόλον τὸν τοῦ Πηλέιδον ἀδεῖν—the original harmonies have disappeared almost as completely as in the English,

“Sing, goddess, the wrath of Peleus’ son.”

The reason of this loss of melody is simple ; it is loss of vowels. As Aristoxenus says, vowels are vocal sounds, consonants are merely noises. The more consonants there are in a language, the more it diverges from music and approaches to discord. It is when a language has lost its own music that men call in all the instruments of the wind and string orchestra. So Pindar in the opening words of the Olympian and the Pythian Odes, ἄριστον μὲν ὕδωρ and χρυσέα φόρμιγξ runs over the gamut of the vowel sounds as a modern pianist might run over the keys of his instrument before he begins to play.

The Greeks had only two kinds of instruments which they regarded as really musical, *the lyre*—*cithara*, *chelys*, *phorminx*, and the *flute-clarinet*, *aulos*. The art of playing the lyre was called citharistic, the art of playing the flute auletic ; citharistic and auletic being thus together the equivalent of the first half of our phrase “a little music *and* singing.”

They had certainly other implements for the production of sound : the trumpet, *salpinx* ; the drum, *tympanum* ; the Pan pipes, *syrinx* ; the bell, *codon* ; and the many varieties of harp, mostly with foreign names, the *trigon*, the *barbitos*, the *pandoura*, the *nablas*, the *sambuca*, the *magadis*, etc. But in Greek music the lyre and the flute alone are of importance, for they are the only Greek instruments fit for accompanying the voice,

which is the true function of all instruments. Even a modern composer shrinks from bringing the voice into competition with drum or trumpet. Moreover the Greeks, unlike the English and the Romans, disliked *loud* noise, which they thought barbarous ; and in their literature the bell, the trumpet, and the drum are generally spoken of with a certain scorn, as inartistic devices, fit only for the foreigners who invented them.

Of the lyre there were two forms, the *cithara* and the *chelys*. The *chelys* was a small instrument, made of wood and tortoise-shell, lightly put together, with seven strings, and not provided with any means of altering their pitch.

There is a specimen of the smaller type of *chelys* in the British Museum. The wood is sycamore ; the two uprights are curved and fixed into the tortoise-shell, which forms the sound-board. The cross-bar slips over the points of the uprights and rests on notches. The length of the whole instrument is 22 inches ; the width varies between seven and nine inches. There are still marks on the cross-bar where the strings were wound and tightened, but the strings themselves have disappeared.

The *cithara* was more substantial, with a large sounding-board, its seven strings having stops which allowed the original note of each string to be raised a semitone by the pressure of the left forefinger. The *cithara* was the professional instrument employed in public performances ; the *chelys* was used at home and by amateurs.

The *cithara* originally, it appears, had only three strings. Linus, the mythological bard, in-

creased them to four. Terpander, in the seventh century B.C., raised the number to seven, Pythagoras to eight. Phrynnis (fl. 445) added a ninth string ; Melanippides (fl. 420)—followed by Ion of Chios—a tenth. Finally Timotheus (446–357) completed the double octave by an eleventh string. The cross-bar could be turned—as is plainly seen on vase paintings—and projected on the right-hand side of the uprights, thus slackening or tightening all the strings. In some cases each separate string had its own clutch peg, working on the cross-bar, by which it could be tightened separately. Whether the fine shades of pitch and tone of which the Greek theorists were so fond of writing were actually possible in practice it is impossible to determine. They belong rather to mathematics than to music, and the Pythagorean monochord was chiefly used in experimenting with harmonic intervals.

But the *cithara* was an Apollinarian instrument, and art at Athens was Dionysiac—especially in the tragic theatre, where the only musical instrument allowed was the pipe of Dionysus, the *aulos*. The pipe required considerably more skill and practice in playing than the lyre, and the musical theorists in consequence almost confined their efforts to the stringed instrument. They contented themselves with the proverb “*auloedus est qui citharoedus fieri non potuit.*” Pipe playing was more of a trade. The female practitioners were of somewhat dubious character : the male artists were often reproached for their fat persons and their gluttony in eating and drinking.

As Hermes and Apollo between them invented

the lyre, so Athena and Pan are connected with the pipe. The national goddess—as was proper—invented the national instrument in its simplest form, the syrinx. But, seeing the distortion of her cheeks caused by blowing, she threw away the pipe in disgust, and Pan took it for his own, to teach the Satyrs and the young Dionysus.

In the syrinx, the sound is produced by blowing across the open end of the tube or across an opening in the side of it. The *aulos* proper has a reed mouthpiece, and by blowing through this the air column is made to vibrate. These reeds were detachable, and soon wore out. They were usually of our clarinet type: a tube of cylindrical bore, with the acoustic properties of the “stopped” pipe, producing a fundamental tone an octave lower than the corresponding tone of an “open” pipe. The ancients probably knew of the other possible variety of reed: the oboe-type, with a tube of conical bore, having the acoustic properties of the “open” pipe, and giving the complete series of harmonics. But all the instruments that have at present been found are of cylindrical bore; for example, the four pipes, now in the Naples Museum, found at Pompeii in 1867. They are straight tubes of ivory, and were originally covered with close-fitting bands of silver. Each tube has, at the end furthest from the finger-holes, a pear-shaped bulb of ivory, supporting a flaring tube of ivory, in which the mouthpiece was placed. They are not quite of the same length, and it is uncertain whether they were used singly or in pairs.

The double pipe was certainly more common

than the single, if we accept the vase evidence ; and it was probably usual to play the melody on one pipe and an accompaniment in accord, with smaller intervals than the octave, on the second. The pipes were bored for the finger-holes : six for the open, eleven for the stopped pipe. In the early instruments, only four finger-holes were made, but when the diatonic scale was established the number of holes was increased, and various devices for closing them were used.

Near the mouthpiece there was a single hole—the *syrinx*—which, like the “speaker” in a modern clarinet, enabled the performer to produce without effort the harmonic tones of the instrument. In playing the double flute, the exertion of blowing was evidently considerable and it was usual to wear a leather band—*phorbeia*—round the cheeks and over the mouth. Our authorities vary somewhat in their explanations : one says “it was to prevent the player bursting “his cheeks in blowing” ; another that “it was to soften the tone by preventing violent breathing.” Probably neither is correct, and the *phorbeia* merely served to hold the two pipes in position, leaving the hands free for stopping the notes.

In their simplest form the pipes were made of wood. There is a good specimen in the British Museum—a pair of sycamore-wood pipes found in a tomb near Eleusis. The longer pipe is  $13\frac{1}{2}$  inches, the shorter  $12\frac{1}{4}$  : each pipe has a  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch bore and six finger-holes. They could thus be played either singly or together. In the first case, the pipe would be held with one hand and the stopping managed by the fingers of the other

hand. If both pipes were played together, all the fingers of both hands would be wanted, and the pipes were kept in position by the *phorbeia*. The Greeks in Italy invented a more elaborate form of pipe, with an interior tube of ivory and an outer cylinder of bronze. A pair of these pipes—with mouthpieces shaped in the form of a Maenad's bust—are also in the British Museum, one pipe  $11\frac{1}{2}$  inches long, the other  $10\frac{1}{4}$ : both having six finger holes. Finally, in the same museum case there is a specimen of the rare "*plagiaulos*" discovered by Sir Charles Newton at Halicarnassus. It is made of bone and bronze, with a mouthpiece still entire, fixed, not to the end, but to the side of the pipe. Such instruments were apparently held in the same position and blown in the same way as our orchestral flute, but they were seldom used.

It will be noticed that neither the *cithara* nor the *aulos* was very elaborate in structure. They did not require any very long study for their mastery, and the professional musician, in our sense of the word, scarcely existed. The pipe was usually played by girls, who depended as much on their personal attractions as on their musical skill. In this, as in all things, the Greeks disliked the specialist, and when the specialist came to the front—specialist soldiers such as Philip of Macedonia, specialist teachers, specialist musicians—the true Greek ideas began at once to perish. A Greek prided himself above everything on versatility, and there is nothing more interesting in Aristotle than the elaborate pretence he makes of being merely an amateur

in every subject. Inspired by a gentleman's curiosity, and not a pedant's love of research, he jots down his observations in careless notes for other careless but cultivated gentlemen to read.

This is the reason why the Greeks would have approved of such a mechanical device as the Pianola, which enables the amateur to do away with the drudgery of practice and, by the exercise of pure intelligence, become his own interpreter of music. But they would—regretfully—have disapproved of the violin—one of our few real inventions—as requiring too much time for a gentleman to spend on anything which eventually becomes a matter of hand skill, and reduces him to the level of the highly trained artisan.

## II

Instrumental music among the Greeks was comparatively simple; musical theory was very much the reverse. There has always been a close connection in England between the musical art and a certain eccentricity in the persons of its professors. In Greece the eccentrics mostly confined themselves to musical theory, where they revelled to their hearts' content: moral, mystical, medical, mathematical—Pythagoras, Plato, the Asclepiadae—every kind of theorist and every kind of delusion, intentional or involuntary. Pythagoras tried to force his mysticism and hazy mathematics into music; “the intervals of music,” he said, “are to be judged intellectually through numbers rather than sensibly by the ear.” In pursuance of this he constructed an instrument with

only one string—a *monochord*, or, as it is sometimes called, a *canon*. The apparatus consisted of a single stretched string with a fixed stopping-point in the middle, called the *magas*, and a movable boss called the *hypagogeus* used to cut off from the string such fractions of its length as the theorist required. With this Pythagoras attempted to judge tones and fix scales by string measurements, adding a large amount of speculation as to “sacred numbers” and starting a series of mathematical calculations which were finally put in their proper place by Aristoxenus.

Plato combined this mysticism and mathematics with vague theories as to the “music of the spheres” and “golden numbers,” and introduced a new diversion by confusing music and morals. In the third book of the “*Republic*” there is a great deal of talk about the morals of musical rhythm, while wind-music is tabooed altogether. The lyre is allowed—although grudgingly—on condition that musicians confine themselves strictly to serious tunes.

The Asclepiadae took another and a bolder line. They claimed that music—under the blessing of God and with proper conditions of temple treatment and votive offerings—would cure all, or at least most, diseases. Music is a very wonderful thing, but it did not quite do that. There is much loose talk in Greek literature about its curative properties ; of actual evidence little or none.

But this is the weaker side of Greek theorizing. There was also a vigorous and long-sustained effort, lasting through several centuries, which finally

settled the musical scale, and is still the foundation of musical technique.

The earliest traditional scale was that of Hermes' lyre, with its three strings tuned e—a—e—. To these three very soon a fourth string was added, and a tetrachord formed  $e\text{—}\overset{\text{semitone}}{f}\text{—}\overset{\text{tone}}{g}\text{—}\text{—}a\text{—}$ . The last note of the four—when later three more strings were added—was called *mesē*, “middle,” and was considered the master note. The Greeks had no sense of a tonic sound, and while we read notes upwards they went downwards; moreover, no semitone between —a— and —g— was allowed, and so the tonic was impossible.

With the simple tetrachord given above the following laws were evolved :

- (1) Between the two extremes of the four strings there shall be a consonance of sound called a *diatessaron*—the modern fourth.
- (2) Between the string the highest in pitch and the string next to it lower in pitch, there shall be a separation of sounds not less than one full tone.
- (3) Between the third string, and the fourth string there shall be a separation in pitch equal to one semitone.

From two such simple tetrachords arranged together was built up the Sacred Enharmonic Conjunct Scale, the beginning of Western music, represented in our notation by the letters e—f—f sharp —a—b flat —b natural —d; where the upper and lower tetrachords have one note, the *mesē* —a—, in common. The last step was the introduction of the Diatonic Genus, probably

borrowed from the East, which gave finally the Dorian Diatonic Conjunct Scale, e—f—g—a—b flat, c—d—.

So far the tetrachord could go. The next great innovation was made by Terpander, who added three more strings to the lyre, and practically invented the octave system. It is true that Terpander's lyre had only seven strings and was without any mechanism for semitone stopping ; but, as Mr. J. Curtis has ingeniously suggested, this difficulty probably was got over by "magadizing." The upper octave of the lowest note was played as an harmonic on the lowest string. The pitch of the strings could not be altered during performance ; but, as vase paintings show, the *chelys* admitted of semitone modification, if tuned beforehand, by means of thongs, plaited on the tuning-bar and engaging the strings, which could then be tightened or relaxed at will.

These variations of pitch, and others effected by slackening or tightening all the strings with a turn of the tuning-bar, gave rise to the different scales known as "harmonies," Lydian, Aeolian, Mixo-lydian, etc., which developed during the seventh and the sixth centuries B.C. Pythagoras brought the process to an end by adding an eighth string to the lyre, and thereby did away with the necessity of re-tuning and passing from one scale to another.

The Pythagorean lyre was the seven-stringed *cithara* tuned to the lower —d—, with an eighth string added, and the Phrygian trope d—e—f—g—a—b—c—d— was created. Pythagoras was an innovator and a successful one. Although the

old-fashioned musicians clung to the old harmonies, produced by re-tuning, the idea of playing the various scales by extending the compass of the lyre prevailed, and the "theatrical tropes," as they were called, were gradually extended by the addition of fresh strings.<sup>1</sup>

The Pythagorean scale of eight notes consists of two tetrachords, or groups of four notes, with a major tone. The lower tetrachord consists of the notes from *Hupatē* to *Mesē*; the higher from *Paramesē* to *Netē*; the interval between *Mesē* and *Paramesē* is the "disjunctive tone" " *Tonos Diazeuktikos*."

Ion of Chios, adding a tenth string, made what is called the Lesser Perfect system of three tetrachords and a major tone, which in our notation would be represented thus: —a— (taken into the scale to complete the octave and called *Proslambanomenos*) ; b—c—d—e—, the third tetrachord ; e—f—g—a *Mesē*, the first tetrachord ; a *Mesē*, b flat —c—d—the second tetrachord.

This is the scheme to which Thomas Peacock refers in " *Gryll Grange*," when the old gentleman, introducing his family, says: " Their names are *Betsey*, *Catherine*, *Dorothy*, *Eleanor*, *Fanny*, *Grace*, *Anna*; the key of A minor. They were christened from the Greek diatonic scale and make up two conjunct tetrachords, and this young gentleman, whose name is *Algernon*, is the *Proslambanomenos*."

In all these Greek scales, the key-note lies,

<sup>1</sup> The names of the Pythagorean notes are these: *Nete*, *Paramete*, *Trite*, *Paramese*, *Mese*, *Lichanos*, *Parhupate*, *Hupate*. Or in English: Lowest ("our highest"), Next lowest, Third, Next middle, Middle, Fore-finger, Next highest, Highest (our "lowest").

not at the beginning, but within the scale—*Mesê*, “middle”—and is not always in the same position. Pythagoras, in his fine vague way, compared it to the sun in the centre of the universe, whose course through the heaven is ever changing and yet ever the same.

The final stage in scale-making was reached by Aristoxenus—and the Disjunct or Greater System Complete was established thus :—a—b—c—d—e—e—f—g—a—b—c—d—e—e—f—g—a. Didymus (fl. A.D. 60) and Claudius Ptolemy (fl. A.D. 130) completed the mechanical structure of musical theory.

Aristoxenus *the Musician* was born at Tarentum in the first half of the fourth century B.C. His youth was spent in Mantinea, and after studying for a time under the Pythagorean, Xenophilus of Chalcis, he became a pupil of Aristotle. He is described as being very austere and dignified in behaviour, with a pronounced antipathy to laughter. But he was a disagreeable man, a backbiter and slanderer. When Theophrastus was chosen to succeed Aristotle as head of the Peripatetic school, a position which Aristoxenus had expected for himself, the musician took his revenge by propagating unseemly stories—for he was also a writer of biographies and general essayist—concerning his own teacher Aristotle, Aristotle's teacher Plato, Plato's teacher Socrates, and even Socrates' wife. His personal character, however, does not affect the merits of his scientific work, and the three books of his *Harmonics*—which are excellently translated by Dr. Macran—are by far the best guide to Greek musical

theory. Suidas assigns to Aristoxenus the authorship of 453 works but of these none now remain except the "Harmonics," portions of a treatise on rhythm, and some fragments recently found in Egypt.

The Harmonics, a book of about seventy pages, begins in the true Aristotelian manner with a definition of the subject.

"The branch of study which bears the name Harmonic is to be regarded as one of the several divisions, or special sciences, embraced by the general science that concerns itself with melody. Among these special sciences, Harmonic occupies a primary and fundamental position. Its subject matter consists of the fundamental principles—all that relates to the theory of scales and keys . . . . In advancing to the profounder speculations which confront us, when scales and keys are enlisted in the service of poetry, we pass from the study under consideration to the all-embracing science of Music."

The first step, he argues, to a scientific investigation of music is to adjust our different notions of change of voice, *i.e.*, change in position of voice. This will lead us on to musical intervals, to melody and to scales. Then will come notes, and finally, as every scale is located in a certain "region of the voice," we must treat of these regions in general and detail. A discussion of voice precedes an account of the chromatic scale, and Book I ends with an investigation of continuous melody.

The Second Book starts with a personal experience. Plato's pupils, says Aristoxenus, used to come to his lectures on "The Good," expecting to get some practical advice on Riches, Health, or Strength. When they found that his real subject was "The Good" as a predicate to "The Finite," or perhaps some sort of Geometry or

Astronomy, they were proportionately disgusted. It is therefore necessary to realise what Harmonic is : it is not a sublime science and it has no moral value ; but on the other hand it is a necessary part of a musician's equipment, and appeals in the last resort to the two faculties of hearing and intellect. A recapitulation of the seven divisions of the science follows. The method pursued is admirable, and many a shrewd blow is dealt both to the Pythagorean theorists and the professional musician. Of the first Aristoxenus says : “ To make the amateur a judge in science is the mark of ignorance, profound and invincible ” ; of the second, “ No instrument will supply a foundation for the principles of harmony : harmony is permanent and immutable, and it is sheer folly to find it in the finger-holes of the aulos or the strings of the cithara.” The third book is shorter and less interesting. It consists of twenty-six musical problems and axioms, stated in the manner of Euclid : *e.g.* “ It is required to prove that from the highest note of a ‘ Pycnum ’ there is but one progression in either direction ” ; and so the “ Harmonics ” ends.

This brief summary gives a very inadequate idea of the enormous importance of Aristoxenus in musical history. His method—a combination of scientific experiment and common sense—revolutionised the treatment of theory ; and his method, as so often happens with the Greeks, is more important than the actual facts he gives us.

But on many points of fact such information as he does give is by far the best we have ; *e.g.* his discussion on “ semantic,” the art of writing down

music. Musical notation—the use of written characters to represent musical sounds—existed from very early times in Greece, and Aristoxenus spends some trouble in showing that the art of writing down a melody—"Parasemantikē"—is by no means identical with the art of music itself "Harmonikē."

The system is curiously complicated. The characters—"neumes" as they are called from the Greek *νεῦμα* = "direction"—are used in two sets; one for the note assigned to the singer, another for the accompaniment of lyre or pipe. The notes for the voice are the letters of the ordinary alphabet and these can be modified by accents, or slightly altered as occasion requires. Thus the letter E stands for our note c, Ε reversed stands for c sharp.

The instrumental notes are quite different in appearance and were only explained a few years ago by Westphal, who showed that they were the first fourteen letters of a very archaic form of the Greek alphabet, found in a few Peloponnesian inscriptions. The forms of the letters are very peculiar; there is a crooked iota, a delta with one side omitted, a theta made of half a circle and two very quaint forms of lambda—both used—making altogether fifteen signs. These same characters are also used in the upper end of the scale, with accent marks to distinguish them, and may then be regarded as answering to the white notes of the modern key-board.

## III

The later developments of musical theory form part of the history of Hellenistic rather than Hellenic music. It must never be forgotten that to the Greeks of the great age, and especially to the Athenians, the highest form of music was vocal music. Syllables rather than notes were the material with which their composers worked. We possess indeed much more Greek music than is commonly supposed—not the music of the Delphic Hymn to Apollo or the Euripidean fragment from the “*Orestes*,” but the texts of the melic poets and the tragedians. Their musical significance is obscured merely by our pernicious habit of reading instead of reciting verse; of relying on the eyes rather than on the ear. We must think of musical words and phrases instead of musical notes and bars, if we want to get back to the Greek point of view, and the varying length of syllables will correspond to the varying length of notes. Dr. White’s statement that “in Greek poetry all short syllables are normally of the same length; all long syllables are normally of the same length; and the time ratio of the former to the latter is 1 to 2,” does not agree with facts.

Aristoxenus gives us a list of varieties in length of syllables, which is a source of much difficulty to those who cling to the simple and convenient belief of nothing but long and short. The shortest syllable of all, he says, is the “*Chronos Prôtos*,” “the first time”; then comes the “*Chronos Disemos*,” “the diseme syllable,” apparently twice the length of the first time. Then we have

the triseme, the tetraseme, the pentaseme and the hexaseme syllable, three, four, five, and six times respectively the length of the first.

It is quite possible to construct a table of quantities in Greek words, which will match our table of notes, from breve to semi-demi-semi-quaver. The shortest possible note in our music is the simple short vowel, as it comes three times in *ἔλεγε*. Long runs of such short-syllable notes are a distinct feature of Greek musical composition, scarcely possible in any other language, and are especially frequent in Euripides. The demi-semi-quaver is the short vowel in doubtful position, *e.g.* the first syllable in *ἄμνος*. The semi-quaver is the half-elided diphthong which appears in *ποιῶ*; the quaver the short vowel before a double consonant, as *ἴξω*. The crotchet is a long vowel in the simplest position, *ῆδε*. The minim is heard in *ῆδει*, the semibreve in *ῶνδρες*, and the breve in *εὐστοχεῖ*.

The Greek ear, moreover, wonderfully sensitive as it was to sound, could distinguish a fainter note than any we possess in the elided vowel, and by varieties of diphthongs such as *εὐρε* and *ῆυρε*, could make a semi-crotchet and a semi-minim.

The many varieties of Greek melic poetry again are an equivalent to the different forms of modern musical composition. The four chief divisions Dithyramb, and Nome, Hymn and Epinician Ode, correspond roughly to our Overture and Concerto, Sonata and Symphony. The dithyramb was the most dramatic of all the forms, and in its early history can scarcely be distinguished from tragedy. Both were closely connected with Dionysus,

reached perfection at Athens during the fifth century B.C., and then decayed. Originally the difference between them was merely one of rhythm. The dithyramb, with its cyclic chorus, was a round dance, a *rondo* in double-three time, as its name shows. Tragedy, with its tragic chorus, was a square dance, a "contre-dance," in four-time, the movements of the dancers being transverse, across the orchestra.

Arion of Lesbos introduced the dithyrambic form; Lasos of Hermione elaborated its final shape. Melanippides and Cinesias were the chief composers in the great period. The dithyramb became more lyric, more imaginative than tragedy, and its history may be summed up in Plutarch's words: "At first the art of poetry took the chief place, and the flute was only a subordinate helper; but afterwards it was corrupted." The music of the words became less, and the music of the accompaniment more important. As we see by inscriptions, after B.C. 300 the flute-player was esteemed above the poet; and soon the dithyramb as a musical form was dead.

The *nome*, developing from a simple *plain-song*, in its final form, partook of the nature of a symphony and a concerto. It resembled the latter, in that either of the chief orchestral instruments could be used, while the solo portions of the melody were of very considerable importance. The word *nome* means both "ranger" and "arranger," and the *nome* was like a symphony in its wide range of subjects and the strict arrangement of its subject matter. It consisted of five main parts — Archa, Katatropa, Omphalos,

Sphragis, Epilogos — andante, allegro, adagio, scherzo, finale, a modern composer would call them. The Archa — Beginning — stated the themes ; the Katatropa—Transition, generally in quick time—led to the main subject, the Omphalos or Navel of the work, which was very often a poetical treatment of the struggle between Apollo and the Dragon, the powers of Light and Darkness. This was followed by the Sphragis, the Seal, where the poet introduced his own personal feelings, often expressed in proverbial language and perhaps sung in a higher pitch than the rest. The Epilogos or Finale brought the work to an end.

In the hands of its greatest composers, Timotheus of Miletus and Philoxenus of Cythera, the *nome* became a serious rival to tragedy. Indeed Timotheus in his "Persae," and Philoxenus in his "Cyclops," invited comparison with Aeschylus and Euripides. Timotheus, like some modern composers, tried to make music express both the most intimate emotions of men and the greatest forces of nature. Like many another, he wrote a passage of "storm music" ; the comment of his audience was that the sound was like nothing so much as a pot boiling over. In the "Semele" he tried to express the agony of a mother's travail : the critics said, "Yes, your words certainly have a shrieking sound ; but have they anything else ?"

The only difference between the methods of Strauss in the "Domestic Symphony" and those of Timotheus is that one works with notes, the other with words. It was the sound of the words that caught the ear of a Greek audience ; e.g. the opening phrase of Timotheus' "Artemis"—

*μαινάδα θυιάδα φοιβάδα λυσσάδα*—with its accumulation of strange epithets, the dactyl four times repeated, and the alliterative ending.

The dithyramb and the nome were the most, the hymn the least, dramatic of the varieties of melic poetry. The original meaning of the word Hymn is simply “a joining together of sounds,” a symphony or sonata, and it was always used in a wide sense to cover many forms of musical composition. It was generally reflective or narrative, accompanied by the lyre, and could take either the form of a choral or a solo. Its history is coincident with melic poetry, and ranges from the Homeric Hymns on to the age of Alcaeus and Sappho and as late as Timotheus.

The Epinikion or Triumphal Ode is like our symphony in the elaboration of its musical form, and in the fact that it was brought to perfection by one man. The Theban eagle and the singer of Bonn wrote in other forms than the ode and the symphony, but these particular forms they made their own, and it is recognised that in them they will never be surpassed. The Epinikion in its simplest shape is just the musical phrase

*τήνελλα καλλίνικε  
χαῖρ' ἄναξ.*

“ See, the conquering hero comes.”

As the Choral Symphony is built up from a few simple tunes, so Pindar builds up from this the wonderful structure of the Fourth Pythian Ode, where the splendour of epic poetry is wedded to the most elaborate verbal music. Not only are the formal rules of *nome* composition observed,

but a subtle system of word—assonance and repetition is used. Other composers, Bacchylides and Simonides, attempted the *Epinikion* with success, but Pindar stands supreme.

The *Dithyramb*, *Nome*, *Hymn* and *Ode* are the four chief musical forms, but there is a large number of less important varieties. The *Prosodion* and the *Paean*, for example, are processional music: the *Prosodion* grave and serious, in the Handelian style; the *Paean* now martial, like some of Chopin's *Polonaises*, now festive, like our drinking song or musical grace. The *Skolion* was also of this last style, but of a more irregular nature: as its name shows, it was syncopated, rag-time music. Another variety of the processional was the *Hymenaeus* and the *Epithalamion*, both sung at the wedding ceremony and having the refrain as their distinctive feature. These were bright, cheerful rhythms; the *Threnos* and the *Kommos* were of a mournful type, the music of lamentation, written in a minor key; a funeral march or a penitential psalm.

The *Hyporchema* and the *Enkomion*, on the other hand, were the music of mirthful revelry, corresponding to our ballet music or Christmas carol. Finally the *Silos*—in one of its forms at least—was a scherzo; the *Adonidion* a mournful largo; while the *Erotika* answer fairly well to our waltz rhythms and ballad music.

But the Greek melic poets—Alcman, Sappho, Terpander, and many another—only exist for us in inconsiderable fragments, and we have to turn elsewhere for musical material. Abundance of such material we possess—if we know how to use

it—in the works of the five great musicians whose librettos are still carefully being studied word for word, often with very little thought of their musical significance. Their names, are Pindar, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes, and the distinctive features of their musical style will best be illustrated by comparing them with some of our instrumental composers ; for example the great classical quartette Bach, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Mozart, and the modern Richard Strauss.

Pindar and Bach have many points of union. They are both the fathers of a style : somewhat austere, somewhat dry, somewhat lacking in variety ; but never trivial, never mean, never uninteresting, if you will submit yourself to their discipline. Neither can be called easy reading, nor do their beauties reveal themselves to the casual student. They are impersonal artists with a passion for perfection in form, and seldom obtrude their own emotions or feelings. The Well-tempered Clavichord and the Epinician Odes are the delight of the accomplished musician, Greek or English, and Pindar's formal system of Strophe and Antistrophe has its analogy in the Preludes and Fugues of the German master. Pindar and Bach are the founders of an art : they are perfect in their self-imposed limitations, but they left a wide field for their successors.

Aeschylus and Beethoven, the greatest names in music, carried on their work to the loftiest heights that the human mind has reached. Both men were cast in the heroic mould and were born in an heroic age ; one a contemporary of the Persian

Wars and knowing by actual experience the joy and thrill of mortal danger ; the other inspired by the greatest event of modern history, the French Revolution, and an eye-witness of the trampling up and down Europe of his first hero, the man of the people, Napoleon Buonaparte. With Pheidias and Michael Angelo they are the supreme examples of the grand style in art, and in many of their works—the chorus of the “Agamemnon,” the Fifth Symphony, the Waldstein Sonata—music seems to have fulfilled Aristotle’s definition and reached the extreme limits which the stuff of which she is made allows.

The next pair, Sophocles and Mendelssohn, although of the highest rank as artists, cannot be compared with their great predecessors as men. Both are of a placid, even temperament, successful and enjoying the good things of life, and little troubled by the Titan Spirit of revolt. They are out-of-door men, and the best part of their music—the Hebrides overture and the choruses in the “Oedipus Coloneus”—is directly inspired by the outward and visible aspect of nature. Though they give perfect artistic form of their thoughts, their imagination is not of the most original kind. *Tὰ κοινὰ κανόνες*, “things common to all in a new shape,” may serve as a motto for both. On the other hand they are unsurpassed as masters of their material : the graceful diction of Sophocles, the clear-cut orchestration of Mendelssohn, are the perfection of workmanship ; what they lack is a touch of feminine perversity and malice.

Of this feminine spirit Euripides and Mozart,

the creators of *Phaedra* and *Zerlina*, have their full share. They are the most fascinating of all the great company: men whose lives were full of trouble, and whose works are full of exhilaration and grace. All the charm of melody is theirs: in Euripides joined to an irony which disdained fools, in Mozart to an invincible cheerfulness which overrode grief. They are as various as life itself, and can employ every kind of style. Humour, romance, melodrama, mysticism: all come alike to the composers of the "*Alcestis*" and "*Figaro*," "*Orestes*" and "*Don Giovanni*," the "*Bacchae*" and "*The Magic Flute*." Both have been grossly mishandled by critics. Sometimes it is on technical grounds; because Euripides employed Cephisophon to instruct the flute-player instead of doing it himself—as though the instrumental music had any real importance at Athens; or because Mozart never succeeded in finding an adequate and original libretto—as though the words had any great value to a man whose native tongue was German. Others adopt the tone of artistic morality—"Euripides vulgarised tragedy"; as a matter of fact he founded the modern realistic drama. "It is a pity that Mozart did not confine himself to sacred and instrumental music"; the revival of opera as an artistic form is with these critics a work of no importance.

Certainly both men offer a handle to criticism, for they were not in complete harmony with the form in which they worked. Like Thucydides, they often have to struggle with their material and do not always produce their effect. The delicate humour of the "*Alcestis*" and "*Così fan*

ture" tends to disappear under the conditions of stage performance. The "Helena" and "The Magic Flute" are often judged to be failures because of our lack of wit to understand them.

The last pair, Aristophanes and Richard Strauss, are an example of the rarest of all combinations ; poetical imagination and unbridled humour, the dramatic sense and the musician's gift of song. Aristophanes is easily the cleverest man of his day, Strauss is perhaps the greatest intellect that we have now amongst us. Both are constantly tempted from their true sphere of music by their intellectual interests, and both developed under much the same influences. There is the destructive philosophy of Socrates and Nietzsche as we see it in "The Clouds" and "Zarathustra." There is the grossness of a materialistic age which appears in all of Aristophanes' works, and in Strauss finds its most obvious expression in "Feuersnoth." Finally there is the saving idealism of Euripides and Mozart. Aristophanes is closely akin to Euripides in musical style and dramatic manner, for such plays as the "Lysis-trata" and "The Birds" are quite as serious as the "Helena" and the "Alcestis." In politics, however, Aristophanes posed as a reactionary, and therefore he must pretend to admire Aeschylus, "the man of Marathon," and to dislike Euripides, the prophet of the new socialism. But literature and music are independent of politics. Aristophanes, like many Athenians, knew his Euripides by heart, and the comedies are full of reminiscences of the tragedian's music : so full, indeed,

that it is often difficult to distinguish between parody and original.

It is the same with Strauss. No more than any other musician could he escape from the dead hand of the Wagnerian music drama. Wagner—a lesser Beethoven endowed with the dramatic gift—is responsible for “*Ein Heldenleben*,” “*Salome*,” “*Electra*.” But these are not the real Strauss, who traces rather back to Mozart. “*The Rose Cavalier*” is “*Figaro*” in a modern dress. Both Aristophanes and Strauss are enormously inventive, and both perhaps are somewhat lacking in a sense of proportion. The puritan in morals is offended by their grossness; the puritan in music by their realism. But they are great enough to carry off their weaknesses easily, and it must be remembered that humorous music, like humorous poetry and humorous painting, is almost a contradiction in terms. Hardly any but these two have escaped the pitfall of the trivial: Aristophanes by his subtle use of parody, Strauss by his ingenious perversion of musical forms.

The Greek musicians then have analogies among the moderns, but their musical methods were essentially different from ours. It is a difficult matter to put clearly, with our system of stress accent and variable quantity of syllables, but a simple example will at least illustrate their method:

“ Hi tiddly hi ti hi ! ”

the mere words, by their sound without music suggest an idea of irresponsible revelry. Now in Greek there is a large number of such combinations

of syllables, which express each a different idea. Our distinction between vocal and instrumental music did not exist. The words are the music. Singing and speaking were not very widely separated : every Greek word is a musical phrase, and every sentence a more or less definite melody.

The difference between the dialogue and the chorus in a Greek play is that in the former simple melody predominates ; in the latter there is musical form,—counterpoint. The chief rhythms connoted different ideas. The trochaic, from its association with proverbs, was didactic in character, and thus suitable to gnomic wisdom. Moreover, as the original tendency of Greek speech, like Latin and English, was trochaic, if in a lyric passage the language of ordinary life is wanted, trochaics are used. There is a striking example in the “*Alcestis*.” The chorus, in dactylic rhythm, has described with elegiac pathos the surroundings of Alcestis’ tomb : then in the description comes a traveller who stands by the tomb and speaks, the metre suddenly changing into the trochees of ordinary talk—

*αῦτα ποτὲ προῦθαν' ἀνδρός,  
νῦν δ' ἐστὶ μάκαιρα δαίμων,  
χαῖρ' ὁ πότνι', εὖ δὲ δοίης.*

“Ave Maria, give us thy blessing.”

In the same way Schumann, in “*The Two Grenadiers*,” having established the iambic rhythm for the song, gets his effect at the end by letting the dactylic rhythm of the “*Marseillaise*” strike across the main tune.

The glyconic rhythm *ὑμήν ω ὑμέναι' ὑμήν*—the refrain of the marriage song—has for the

Greek mind all the associations, and more, that the tune of Mendelssohn's Wedding March has for us, and was much more susceptible of adaptation. When glyconics are introduced in a chorus, ideas of marriage may be expected, and those things that go, or should go, with marriage,—love, affection, comfort, a quiverful of children, etc., etc. There is a beautiful example of glyconic music in "The Trojan Woman" of Euripides—delicately poised on the edge of parody—where Cassandra, the unwedded bride of Apollo, sings her own tragic wedding song.

The Ionic a minore, or, as it is sometimes called, the Anacreontic, la la lā—la lā—la lā lā, is of the same nature as the English convivial phrase quoted before and suggests unbridled merry-making and joy; it has the same effect as the insistent *motif* of the peasants' merry-making in the Pastoral Symphony.

In strong contrast to the glyconic and anacreontic are the various Dorian rhythms, such as the enhoplion, and the epitrite. Dactylo-spondaic in character, they are like our Handelian square measures, expressive of manly virtue and independence; such emotions as are evoked in an Englishman's mind by "Rule, Britannia," and "God Save the King," or by such poems as Wordsworth's "Ode to Duty"—"Stern daughter of the voice of God."

These various rhythms are equivalent to what is called in modern music a *figure*; "any short succession of notes, either in melody or a group of chords, which produces a single complete and distinct impression." When they carried with

them, as they usually did, some definite association of ideas, they were used as a modern composer uses a “Leitmotiv” or “guiding theme”; which, to quote Parry again, “consists of figures or short passages of melody of marked character, which illustrate, or as it were label, certain personages or situations in the drama of which the music is the counterpart.”

It was in the management of these varying rhythms that a Greek master could show his musical skill, using all sorts of devices, corresponding to our counterpoint, so as to shift from rhythm to rhythm while keeping the movement of the whole passage going. Some of the more simple of such devices were these :

- (1) A link syllable interposed between two lines and so designed that it can go with either.
- (2) Echo, the end of one line repeated at the beginning of the next.
- (3) Overlapping, where the middle part of a line is common to two rhythms.

As Dr. Headlam shows, in the brilliant essay from which these details are taken, a good example of all three is to be found in the great chorus of the “Agamemnon” ll. 681-689,

*τίς ποτ ὠνόμαζεν ὁδ'  
 ἐσ τὸ πᾶν ἐτητύμωσ—  
 μή τις ὅντιν οὐχ ὁρῶ-  
 μεν προνόιαισι τοῦ πεπρωμένου  
 γλῶσσαν εν τύχᾳ νέμων ;—  
 τὰν δορίγαμβρον ἀμφινει-  
 κῆ θ' Ἐλέναν ; ἐπεὶ πρεπόντως  
 ἐλένας, ἐλανδρος, ἐλέπτολις,*

Here the first five lines, with their proverbial wisdom are in trochaics. At line six there is a *link* of one long syllable and the rhythm shifts for two lines to Ionic a minore, to describe the wanton Helen flying to the East. Then, in line eight, there is a transition to glyconics by overlapping—a change which becomes vital when we turn to the corresponding line in the antistrophe, where the marriage of Helen and Paris is described.

This then, briefly, is the method whereby every tragic chorus and every Pindaric ode is written : subtle, elaborate, and elusive as the curving lines of the Parthenon. But, besides this, every Greek word and every Greek phrase was music. We cannot too strongly emphasise the truth that to a Greek and to a Roman poet it was the sound of the words that mattered.

αἰαῖ ταὶ μαλάχαι μὲν, ἐπὰν κατὰ κāπον ὅλωνται,  
as Moschus sings, or

“ Eheu fugaces, Postume, Postume.”

The poet was a musician first and a logician afterwards. How far sound will override sense will depend on different temperaments. Pindar, for example, is chiefly concerned with musical form. Euripides has a good many other things to consider beside the sound of his verse. Greek poetry contains a substantial residue of thought which you can divorce and present apart from the sound. Latin poetry is a matter almost entirely of sound, and of original thought there is confessedly little.

A great deal of modern poetry is weakest in melody—the vital quality of verse ; it is overburdened by thought, and does not contain

enough music. Much of our instrumental music is in the same case: it is prodigiously clever, but it is not beautiful. But the genuine English inspiration has always kept close to reality and the best English lyrics sing themselves. The words *are* the music and require no instrumental accompaniment. "Come unto these yellow sands," "Sigh no more, ladies," "Go, lovely rose," "I wandered lonely," these and hundreds of other poems—sometimes written by our greatest poets, but yet often anonymous—are examples of the simple English music, which differs from ancient music chiefly in its simplicity.

Ancient vocal music is a matter of very subtle and elaborate cadences; but in every case, Pindar or Euripides, Greek or Latin, the sound is the first consideration, and therefore right pronunciation and the habit of reading aloud are the two most important things in the study of ancient poetry.

To study Virgil, for example, without constantly testing the sound of his lines by recitation, is exactly as useful—as much and as little—as reading the score of a modern opera without hearing it played. Take any page you will, and you will find that sense and sound go together. Open the Eclogues where the poet is as yet scarcely master of his method—

"tale tuum carmen nobis, divine poeta,  
quale sopor fessis in gramine, quale per aestum  
dulcis aquae saliente sitim restinguere rivo."

and then note the fuller melodies of the Georgics—

“ *Et cum exustus ager morientibus aestuat herbis,  
ecce supercilio clivosi tramitis undam  
elicit : illa cadens raucum per levia murmur  
saxa ciet, scatebrisque arentia temperat arva.*”

It may be possible—but it is not a task lightly to be attempted—to reproduce this elaborate music, which condenses into four lines with their hissing sibilants and melodious liquids, the unending drama of drought and flood :—“ A spring of water in a dry land.” There is a simple economy of means, but when the dry sibilants disappear before the liquid sound of “ *arentia temperat arva* ” the same effect is produced as Wagner, with all the resources of his orchestra, obtains in the “ *Tannhäuser* ” overture.

Translations are dangerous things, or they may well become dangerous, if people are misled into thinking that they are what they are not. There are a great many authors, Greek and Latin, who were careless of form, wrote in prose, and hardly claimed to be literary artists. Caesar and Polybius will serve as examples and they do not lose by translation to anything like the same extent as a poet, the real maker of words, or such prose writers as Cicero and Plato, whose prose rhythms are often as elaborate as poetry itself. To realise some of the beauty of ancient music is the duty of every classical teacher and scholar. The simplest method is to begin with those Latin poets who formed their style on Greek models and “ wedded the music of Aeolia to Italian measures.” After Horace and Virgil may come the simpler Greek lyrists, and then Euripides and Aristophanes, the latter most conveniently in the edition of

Otto Schroeder, where the text of all the lyric passages is given in full, with the metre in the margin. Sophocles is slightly more elaborate; Pindar and Aeschylus are the final crown. The study of much of ancient literature will at once take a fresh interest, and nothing is really needed except the habit of reading aloud, a musical ear, and lastly—some intelligence. As the Greek poet says :—

*νοῦς ὄρη καὶ νοῦς ἀκούει*

or in Aristoxenus' scientific prose—*ἀνάγεται δὲ ἡ πραγματεία εἰς δύο, εἴς τε τὴν ἀκοήν καὶ εἰς τὴν διάνοιαν.*

“ The practice of music depends finally on the two faculties of hearing and intellect.”

But to think that a translation into our gruff Teutonic can give the effect of the subtle harmonies of an Aeschylean chorus or the majestic rhythm of Horace's alcaics, is to indulge a delusion. It is as though you were to attempt to represent a Beethoven Symphony through the medium of a seaside German band. Translations here are foredoomed to failure; for they must fail to realise the vital correspondence between sound and sense, which rules in ancient art.



### III

#### PAINTING

*“ O Attic shape ! Fair altitude ! with brede  
Of marble men and maidens overwrought.”*

##### I

GREEK painting offers a curious paradox. It has three chief divisions ; frescoes, easel pictures, and vases, and of these the first two, at least in concrete examples, have almost entirely disappeared, although we have copious literary references in the elder Pliny and such late Greek writers as Lucian, Pausanias and the Philostrati. The third section is neglected by ancient writers, but of it we possess innumerable specimens, so that it is from the vase paintings that any real idea of actual Greek methods must now be obtained. Their technique, restricted though it be, illustrates most of the points in which ancient practice and theory differ from ours, and it may be well first to consider what those points are.

A Greek painter was not a colourist in the modern sense, nor did he ever attempt to reach the splendours of a Turner or a Veronese. The range of his palette was usually restricted to three or four tones ; black, white, red—the three colours that Titian used for his carnations—and occasionally yellow ; all the harmonies of blue and green

he put aside. They were not indeed unknown, and even in the great age of the potter's art some of the white Attic lecythi are polychromatic ; but the general law of economy of means worked as effectively in painting as in all the other Greek arts, so long as art itself was not decadent.

The reasons that made it possible so often to dispense with blue and green reveal a second point of difference. Although we have examples of landscape in some Ionian and Corinthian " *pinnakes*," yet usually the Greek painter only concerned himself with the human form. " *Zôgraphos* painter" in Greek is the depitor of *living* things ; background in pictures, as on the stage, was of little importance ; the human body was the artist's chief preoccupation and no other school has been so passionately enamoured of the beauties of the nude. Often using his brush, like the Japanese, to do the work of a pencil, it was on design that the Greek chiefly relied ; the contour of limbs, the play of muscles, the folds of drapery. Apart from technique, it was his purpose to reveal character by facial expression, and with landscape and all that we mean by the poetry of nature he had little concern. The tender greens, grays, and blues of a Corot or a Constable were never needed by a Greek, for he had no acquaintance with the scenes and the moods that Corot and Constable portray. It is impossible to over-estimate the influence of nature on art ; and of woods, of sylvan glades and babbling brooks the Greek knew little. The romance and the mystery that haunt the forest depths, the true spirit of Gothic art, could never come to birth in a land where there are few

trees and where the water courses are either raging torrents or sun scorched beds of stone. Ruskin's wonderful word picture in "The Stones of Venice" emphasises the contrast of environment which is one of the secrets of our detachment from ancient ideas, and his description of the change from the white light of the Mediterranean lands to the rainy green of central Europe has its analogy in the difference between ancient and modern art.

Sunlight and clear air are the essential qualities of Greek scenery and they also fix the qualities of Greek painting. Rhythm and balance, quietude and grace ; a devotion to the pure line—*picturae summa suptilitas*—the impeccable shape : an insistence on the importance of drawing, a care that is almost meticulous in tracing every muscle and sinew ; the qualities in short that we call academic and find at their highest in Raphael and Ingres, the result of pains and discipline, where success is won by a steady elimination of individual caprice. The problems of atmosphere, which have tormented modern artists, for the Greeks had no existence. Under the Greek sun the shadows are black and distinct, the light is clear and certain. The veils of mist, the clouded outlines of our countryside have their beauty, but it is not a Greek beauty, and we must not expect to find any trace of it in Greek painting. The ancients knew the splendour of light, we moderns glorify the shade.

The sun makes all hues seem alike ; the shade of the forest gives each its value, and we, under our grey sky, attach much more importance to

colour, especially to bright and varied colour, than did the Greeks. The standard of our aesthetic perception is almost exclusively the eye, and we use the epithet "beautiful" merely with regard to external appearance. We call a flower beautiful even though it lacks fragrance, the true beauty of flowers. We say "a beautiful apple," though the fruit be tasteless, if only it has a bright ruddy skin. Even with female beauty we judge rather by the face than by the body, and for aesthetic purposes all our senses save those of sight and hearing are starved.

It is a curious fact, this degradation of the senses, and the consequent narrowing of the channels by which art conveys beauty to the soul. A "sentient" being is properly one who judges by his smell; we still speak of an exquisite "touch" and of the "perfection of taste"; but for artistic purposes these three senses, the most intimate and real of the five, have become almost atrophied. Perhaps the best definition of the difference between idealism and realism in art, between the romantic and the realistic school in literature, is that the first depends for its impressions on the two senses, sight and hearing, which move in a sphere apart from actual contact with the body, and are therefore more capable of illusion than the strictly physical sensations given by the fingers, nose, and palate. The realist will use all five senses impartially; the idealist depends on eye and ear, and his art tends to be divorced from life.

It is only barbarians who restrict the use of the word "beautiful" to things that please the eye.

The Greeks pursued an exactly opposite course and often called a thing beautiful entirely because of its inner and unseen fairness. Virtue to them was beautiful, knowledge beautiful, death even beautiful if met in a noble cause. But with us the eye is supreme and the result is felt even in our visual judgments. By an English spectator the charm of colour is far more readily appreciated than the charm of line, and in response to the demand for colour the range of the modern painter's palette has extended. With the Greeks things were different, and, as usual, the extent of that difference is clearly shown in language ; here indeed by the meanings of one word. In Greek "Chroma" means first "the skin" ; then "the colour of the skin," "the complexion ;" finally "colour" in general ; and for colour and colours it became the natural term. But all colours that are not the colour of flesh fall outside the root meaning of the word. In fact language shows us that when a Greek thought of colour he thought instinctively of the colour of the human body, not of the varying colours of natural objects. This difference of artistic perception is emphasised in the meaning of the verb "chrozein," which is formed directly from the noun. "Chrozein" does not have for its primary sense "to colour," but rather "to touch." It is concerned with the outward surface of an object as felt by the hand, not with its outward colour as seen by the eye. In other words to a Greek it was the texture, not the colour, of the skin that seemed of primary importance. It was of the contour

of the limbs that he thought, and the sense of touch was as valuable as the sense of sight.

The Romans, who were originally a woodland people, were even greater lovers of colour than we are, and their language is as rich in colour adjectives as Greek is poor. In their interpretation of Greek art, as we see it in the frescoes of Pompeii, they added the bright colours which the Greeks avoided and in their colouring they diverge widely from all Greek ideas. It is true that Zeuxis and Apelles used a richer palette than Polygnotus, but both Cicero and Pliny agree that they confined themselves to the four primary colours as a base, nor have we any real reason to reject this formal evidence. Language again gives us a significant indication. There is only one word in Greek to express the two separate operations of drawing and painting: *γράφω* which means originally "to scratch with a pointed instrument," has to do double work and is equivalent both to the Latin "scribo" "to draw," and "pingo" "to paint." In other words to a Greek painting with a brush was a secondary process subordinate to the primary art of drawing the outline with pen or pencil. Michael Angelo was following the Greek tradition when he said: "He who knows how to draw well can paint everything created. By a single line Apelles was distinguished from Protogenes." In his love of the nude also the great master was with the Greeks. "In my judgment that is the excellent painting which is most like and best imitates any work of immortal God. And that will be the most perfect painting which reproduces the most

noble thing. And what barbarous judge cannot understand that the foot of a man is more noble than his shoe."

As we have seen, then, the Greeks of the great age had little feeling for colour. Their language, their sculpture, their very dress, all prove the same thing. Aristotle sums up the general opinion in the *Poetics*: "If a painter were to put on even the most beautiful pigments in layers he would not produce as pleasurable an effect as if he were to dress his figure in black and white." Even in the Roman age this feeling persisted among them, and five hundred years after Aristotle Philostratus, the most literary of art critics, discussing the respective importance of colour and line, decides in favour of the latter.—"A drawing of a negro needs no colour to show you the man's race, which is already plain from his snub nose, stiff curly hair, and projecting jaw. The older painters were content with one colour : those of the great age used four alone : this present variety of colours is a sign only of decadence."

We have to reckon with this difference of sense perception, and if we wish to appreciate Greek painting we must divest ourselves of our inherited tastes and of those artistic traditions that date from the Renaissance. For centuries now western art has been intolerant of convention, and with Greek painting we must accustom ourselves to convention of the closest sort. The narrow range of the Greek palette can only have allowed of a restricted colour scheme even in their frescoes and easel pictures, and it was on beauty of line

that they must have chiefly relied. It will require as real an effort to appreciate a Greek vase painting as it does to appreciate a Japanese wood print, for in both forms of art the conditions are so widely different from ours. But the effort is worth the making and it will open out a new field of visual impression.

## II

To turn now to the history of Greek art. The mural paintings and the easel pictures of the great age have disappeared nor is there much hope now that we shall ever recover them. Frescoes executed fifteen hundred years before our era have been restored to us at Cnossus, Mycenae, and Tiryns, but not even the closest scrutiny of the excavations at Olympia and Delphi has revealed any trace of the paintings which once covered the walls of portico and temple. Of the brilliant work too that was done on wall and panel between 600 and 400 B.C., nothing now remains. For our knowledge we have to depend chiefly on literature, and here we have material in plenty. Of the three methods of painting commonly practised by the Greeks—fresco, tempera, and encaustic—it seems fairly certain that the first was native to the country, and the natural mode of pictorial expression. In fresco the number of colours used is severely restricted, for they must be of mineral origin and they are mixed only with water; painted directly upon the fresh surface of a wall they are protected, at least partially, from the weather by the thin transparent layer

which the lime in the wall throws off, but against the wear and tear of life, the touch of hands and the rubbing of men's bodies, fresco painting has little chance of survival. Still with all these disadvantages fresco painting is, as every traveller knows, the form most congenial to the Southern races ; there always have been fresco painters in Greece and Italy, and it was in this medium that the greatest works of the sixth and fifth centuries were executed.

The easel painters worked either in tempera or encaustic. In the first process, which remained commonly in use until oil painting was introduced at the Renaissance, the colours are mixed in a medium of white of egg, gum, milk, etc., and are applied upon a surface of wood, stone, or canvas previously prepared with chalk and size : the Greeks preferred wood and especially larch, which they thought impervious to the effect of heat or decay. The encaustic method, especially favoured by the Hellenistic painters, was considerably more elaborate and offers some advantages even over oil painting in richness of tone and durability. Here the colours were mixed in wax, and after being heated on a furnace, were applied, while thus fluid, to the wood or canvas surface. Allowed to cool in their first position they were brought back again to a liquid state by the use of the *cestrum*, a hot iron shaped like a leaf, whose task it was again to melt the wax, and thus prolong the action of the brush, to break up the tones of colour and make them pass one into the other.

Such were the forms of painting. Of the artists who first used them, Philokles and Klean-

thes, Boularchos and Mandrokles are little more than names. Concerning Eumares of Athens we know some few details ; he was a contemporary of Pisistratus and, as Pliny says, " was the first in painting to distinguish men from women." Like most of Pliny's art history, the phrase is obscure and obviously does not refer to outward shape, for even in the earliest paintings the difference of sex is clearly marked. What Eumares apparently did was to break away from the tradition of monochrome and to emphasise, like Titian does in some of his pictures, the difference of colour which so plainly marked off the sexes at Athens, where the skin of men, constantly exposed to the sun and air by their athletic exercises, was a red brown tint, while the women, confined in the seclusion of the harem, had the pallid whiteness of the odalisque.

If Eumares was the Giotto of Greek painting, his successor Cimon of Cleonae was the Leonardo. As an ancient critic says : " Till Cimon's time, painting was practised without art or taste : it was like a new born babe at the breast wrapped in swaddling clothes. Cimon freed it from these bands and gave it space for full growth " (*Aelian Hist. Var.* 88). Like Leonardo, Cimon was a theorist as well as a painter : he developed the technique of perspective and the foreshortening of the figure : the anatomy of nerves and muscles and their representation in paint ; the treatment of drapery, its folds and shadows ; with all this he busied himself and by his studies and practice prepared the way for the great Polygnotus who became for the Greek world at the commencement

of the fifth century B.C. what Michael Angelo was to Italy in the days of the Renaissance ; a revelation in the world of form and idea, a signal of advance, a point of departure for all future progress.

Polygnotus of Thasos, whose father Aglaophon was himself a painter, came to Athens in the time of Cimon and perhaps lived until the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War in 431 B.C. At Athens he painted the "Sack of Troy" which gave Brygos material for his most famous vase, and also "The Rape of the Daughters of Leucippus," of which we have a partial replica in the cup of Meidias which is now one of the chief glories of the British Museum. But his greatest works were the two frescoes for the Leschē of the Cnidians at Delphi ; "The Return of the Greeks from Troy," and "The Vision of Hades." The first deals in a series of pictures with the departure of the victors with their captives ; the numerous figures are arranged in friezes, with inscriptions, on different levels ; but there are no details of landscape. The other in a similar fashion represents scenes in the nether world and is a pictorial commentary on the 10th book of the *Odyssey*. Pausanias' long account is full enough to enable modern critics, with the help of vase paintings, to reproduce both pictures and there are some vivid touches, e.g. in his description, "the baby with its hand before its eyes for fear," and the ghoul Eurynomus "blue-black in colour like the flies that infest meat, sitting on a vulture's skin with projecting fangs." But Pausanias is not an attractive writer and he scarcely notices

the painter's psychological skill or his ethical significance. The one line of the Greek poet—“ All the Trojan war might be read in Cassandra's eyes,” is really more illuminative than these fifteen pages of prose. The triumph of Polygnotus was the result of mind, rather than of manual skill, and it was his insistence on *ethos* that made Aristotle so admire him. For the philosopher he is the most educational of all artists, and his works represent ethically the perfection of Greek painting ; like Aeschylus and Phidias he represents men as greater than they are, and almost alone of Greek painters he conforms to those conditions of serious moral purpose which Aristotle considered as indispensable for all high art.

After Polygnotus the technique of the painter's art developed, the moral purpose declined, and Timanthes is the only artist of the later fifth century who carried on the great tradition. His “ Sacrifice of Iphigeneia ” is conceived in the spirit of the master : the Greek princes, Menelaus, Odysseus, Calchas, stand round the maiden victim, conflicting emotions plain upon each face : one figure alone is veiled, for even Timanthes knew that he could not depict the anguish of Agamemnon. But Timanthes was the exception and the general tendency of the fourth century was to elaborate the mechanical side of art. Apollodorus ὁ σκιάγραφος (fl. B.C. 410) invented chiaroscuro and his practice was extended and improved by Zeuxis and Parrhasios. Both artists excelled in technique and were devotees of the living model. The well known story of the five virgins of Crotona, whose composite beauties gave Zeuxis his figure

of Helen, reveals the difference between an ideal and an imitative art. Equally characteristic is the other anecdote of their rivalry which suggests the trick pictures of the Belgian Wiertz. Zeuxis paints a bunch of grapes so *naturally* that birds fly and peck at the fruit. Parrhasios in his turn paints a curtain which *looks* so much like a curtain that it deceives Zeuxis himself. But it may be that these were merely the amusements of great artists and Parrhasios—"quo nemo insolentius est usus gloria artis"—is a figure strongly recalling the wanton magnificence and pride of some of the Venetian masters. The hero of Pierre Louys' vivid study "L'homme de pourpre," he was both a critic and a painter, and claimed to have fixed the precise limits of the painter's art. His canons of proportion as applied to the human figure became a standard of composition, and were apparently embodied in the "Theseus" which in Pliny's time was still preserved on the Capitol at Rome. Another of his pictures was probably "The Rape of Europa," which is described with a wealth of detail by Achilles Tatius in the first chapter of his novel *Clitophon and Leucippe*.

Both Zeuxis and Parrhasios, beside their mastery of technique, had a very considerable power of bizarre imagination; the painters of the next age exalted technique above all other qualities and this tendency reached its highest point in Apelles, the court painter of Alexander, the only artist allowed to depict the royal countenance. Apelles was acclaimed by the Roman critics as the greatest of all artists, for he painted a mare with such realistic skill that the very horses neighed

greetings ; his Aphrodite Anadyomene, ostensibly the goddess rising from the sea, really a nude portrait of the courtesan Pancaspe, was for Pliny the masterpiece of Greek art. It showed the qualities, which the Romans expected in painting, in their most attractive form ; voluptuous grace, perfection of finish and a certain smooth charm—*χάρις*—which Apelles claimed as his chief merit. Those who like the pretty in art, the female nudes of Greuze and Bougereau, the marble interiors of Leighton and Tadema, would probably delight in Apelles ; if we had his pictures. But they are lost, and it is highly probable that we have nothing much to regret.

He was a painstaking person, the originator of the proverb “ *nulla dies sine linea*,” and an accomplished draughtsman, but he lacked the highest qualities of genius. Greater men than Apelles in all the essentials of serious art were his contemporaries Protogenes of Rhodes who spent seven years on his picture of the hero Ialysus, and Aristeides of Thebes who tried, as Pliny says, to paint the souls of men and give expression in paint to their emotions. His best known picture was the “ *Dying Mother*,” but it is possible that to his brush should be ascribed the original “ *Alexander and Darius at the Battle of Issus*,” of which the well known mosaic found at Pompeii is a copy. In any case, whether the original was by Aristeides, Philoxenus, or the lady artist, Helena, the mosaic, which is still as fresh as when first designed, is one of the most valuable monuments of ancient art. The grouping of the figures and the foreshortening are both complicated

and successfully executed, while the expression of emotion in the faces is realistic in the best sense.

After Apelles painting suffered a swift decline and we come to the age of art criticism. Duris of Samos for example, tyrant and dilettante, who was born about 350, wrote picturesque lives of the great artists, and supplied much of the material which Antigonus of Carystus, the Vasari of Greek painting, used again in the next century. From Duris and Antigonus come most of the anecdotes that fill the pages of Pliny's *Natural History*; from their contemporary Xenocrates of Sicyon are probably borrowed the few really valuable passages of art criticism that the Roman author gives us, for example Book xxxv. c. 67.

“ To paint a figure in relief is no doubt a great achievement, yet many have succeeded thus far. But where an artist is rarely successful is in finding an outline which shall express the contours of the figure. For the contour should appear to fold back and so enclose the object as to give assurance of the parts behind, thus clearly suggesting even what it conceals.” (Trans. Jex-Blake.)

From the Greek, also comes the brief sketch of art development in Book xxxv. c. 29. :

“ Art at last differentiated itself and discovered light and shade, the several hues being so employed as to enhance one another by contrast. Later on glow—a different thing to light—was introduced. The transition between light and shade they called *τόνος* (i.e. colour ‘ values ’); the arrangement of hues and the transition from one colour to another *άρμονγη* (i.e. ‘ tone ’).”

The critical writings of the third century B.C. are lost to us now, but we have a representative of their spirit in the work of Lucian and the other

great sophists of the second and third centuries of our era.

Lucian's interests and judgments embrace nearly every sphere of men's activities and his early professional training renders his art criticism peculiarly valuable. References to the technique and principles of sculpture and painting are frequent in all his writings, and he is one of the first to make pictorial description a definite branch of literature. There is his well known account of Apelles' allegory "Slander":

"On the right sits a man with long ears almost of the Midas pattern, stretching out a hand to Slander who is still some way off. About him are two females whom I take for Ignorance and Assumption. Slander, approaching from the left, is an extraordinarily beautiful woman, but with a heated, excitable air that suggests delusion and impulsiveness; in her left hand is a lighted torch and with her right she is hauling a youth by the hair: he holds up his hands to heaven and calls the gods to witness his innocence. Showing Slander the way, is a man with piercing eyes, but pale, deformed, and shrunken as from long illness; one may easily guess him to be Envy. Two female attendants encourage Slander, acting as tire-women and adding touches to her beauty; one of these is Malice, the other Deceit. Following behind in mourning guise, black robed and with torn hair comes Repentance. She looks tearfully behind her, awaiting shame-faced the approach of Truth."

Even more effective is his word picture of Zeuxis' "The Centaurs," one of the most romantic of that master's works, an imaginative subject which finds a modern parallel in many of the paintings of the great Swiss, Arnold Böcklin:

"On the fresh sward appears the mother Centaur, the whole equine part of her stretched on the ground, her hoofs extended backwards; the human part is slightly raised on

the elbows ; the fore feet are not extended like the others, for she is only partially on her side ; one of them is bent as in the act of kneeling, with the hoof tucked in, while the other is beginning to straighten and take a hold on the ground—the action of a horse rising. Of the cubs she is holding one in her arms suckling it in the human fashion, while the other is drawing at the mare's dug like a foal. In the upper part of the picture, as on higher ground, is a centaur who is clearly the husband of the nursing mother ; he leans over laughing, visible only down to the middle of his horse body ; he holds a lion whelp aloft in his right hand, terrifying the youngsters with it in sport. . . . You have in the husband a truly terrible savage creature ; his locks toss about, he is almost covered with hair, human part as well as equine ; the shoulders high to monstrosity ; the look, even in his merry mood, brutal, uncivilised, wild. In contrast with him, the animal half of the female is lovely ; a Thessalian filly, yet unbroken and unbacked might come nearest ; and the human upper half is also most beautiful, with the one exception of the ears, which are pointed as in a satyr. At the point of junction which blends the two natures, there is no sharp line of division but the most gradual of transitions ; a touch here, a trait there, and you are surprised to find the change complete. It was perfectly wonderful again to see the combination of wildness and infancy, of terrible and tender, in the young ones, looking up in baby curiosity at the lion cub while they held the breast and dug, and cuddled close to their dam.” (Lucian, *Zeuxis*, 4-6 ; tr. Fowler.)

It is true, as Lucian says, that Zeuxis himself was only concerned with the brushwork and technique of his picture and disdained the praise which his friends gave to the sentiment and romantic charm of the composition ; but it is evident that for Lucian the value of the painting lies mainly in its ethical significance.

In Lucian, however, these picture descriptions play only a subordinate part. Other writers—

Callistratus for example, and the Philostrati—published their impressions of statues and pictures as independent works, and from their account we may fairly estimate the qualities in art which the critics of the second and third centuries of our era valued most.

The Philostrati are especially interesting, both for the variety of their writings and the intricacy of their family relationships which have supplied scholars with a fertile theme of controversy. Olearius, in his great edition of the whole Philostrian "corpus" (1709), dismisses as a mere error the statement of Suidas that the first Philostratus lived in the reign of Nero, and himself only acknowledges three persons, father, son and grandson, living under Severus and Caracalla. Modern research has partly confirmed, partly refuted his conclusions and it is now usually supposed that the first Philostratus, son of Verus, was the father of the most celebrated member of the family, Flavius Philostratus, sometimes called "the Athenian." Flavius was the favourite of the Empress Julia Domna, wife of Septimius Severus, and at her instigation wrote that wonderful book, *In Honour of Apollonius of Tyana*. He is also the author of *The Lives of the Sophists*, but not, as Olearius wrongly thought, of the *Eikones*. These, with which we are now concerned, are the work of his near relative, Philostratus, "the Lemnian," born A.D. 191, who is responsible for the first two books, the third book being probably written two generations later by his grandson.

The *Eikones* are among the most fascinating

productions of the elaborate prose style which the sophists of the Attic renascence so assiduously practised. It is a style deftly fashioned for a definite purpose ; "descriptive writing" we should call it ; the sort of thing which, if it were possible, would be taught in schools of journalism to-day. Based on Lucian it is more varied, more poetical, more picturesque than its exemplar—the style of Ruskin as compared with that of Hazlitt—and in the hands of the two Philostrati it is an admirable implement of art-criticism. The elder Philostratus writes descriptions of sixty-four paintings, the younger of seventeen. No dates or painters' names are given and the pictures are all of one class, figure subjects single or in small groups, usually either gods or heroes, Poseidon, Aphrodite, Herakles, Pelops. Occasionally they seem to be suggested by some well known episode in literature, e.g. the group of Ganymede, Eros, and the three goddesses by the passage in Apollonius' Argonautica ; but usually they are merely the stock figures of the ancient legend. Their interest is chiefly literary, for it is obvious that the authors are more interested in sounds and words than in shapes and colours, but they give us also a definite idea of what an ancient critic thought important in painting. This clear impression of course, depends partly upon the cumulative effect of the eighty-one pieces ; here it must suffice to give one specimen of each writer. From the Lemnian we will take the *Narcissus at the Fountain* :

"The fountain is a picture of Narcissus, the picture of the fountain and all Narcissus' body. The lad has just returned

from hunting and as he stands by the spring, the brightness of him, as you see, strikes upon the water and he begins to fall in love with his own beauty, deriving from himself the yearning of desire.

“ The cave is sacred to Achelous and the water nymphs and the details of the picture correspond. The images within are but roughly fashioned of native stone ; some of them have been worn away by time, others have been chipped by shepherd lads or country children who in their simplicity know not the god’s power. No stranger to Bacchus also is the fount, for it was to his Maenads that first it was revealed. Vines and ivy in fair tendrils encircle the water and there is good store of clustering grapes. That is the meaning of the mystic wands. Upon the bank resounds the musical revelry of the birds, each one with its own harmony, and by the margin grow bright flowers, not yet indeed come to fulness, but in the act of springing forth to greet the boy. From the buds there falls a sparkle of dew, for our picture puts reality in the first place, and a bee is just preparing to settle. Perhaps it is itself deceived by the painting, or perhaps we are beguiled when we think it is alive.

“ But be that as it may, no mere picture has beguiled you, sweet lad, nor is it for a shape in paint or wax that you languish ; your own body is before you limned by the living water. The wave sways to and fro and moves your arm, breaking the picture with its restlessness and you cannot detect the trick. You stand motionless as though you had just met a friend and were waiting for the spring to find a voice.

“ The lad is not listening to us : he is rapt, eyes and ears, in the water ; so let us describe him as the picture reveals him to us. He is standing upright, resting with his legs crossed ; his hand leans upon his spear which is fixed in the ground on his left. His right arm bends round to his waist which is raised on that side, the right part of his body rising to correspond with the left part, which drops. At the bend of the elbow you can see the light through his arm and where the wrist turns there are dimples in the flesh. The inside of the hand is mostly in shadow as the light slants obliquely through the

closed fingers. His breast is heaving either with the excitement of the chase or with the thrill of love, and his eyes reveal his longing, as a look of yearning passion softens their natural bold gleam. Perhaps he thinks that his love is already returned, for his shadow is looking at him with the reflection of his own gaze.

“ As to his hair, we should have had much to say about it, if we had met him in the actual chase ; for as he ran and the wind caught it, its movements must have surpassed all counting. Even now some description it must have. Luxuriant is it and bright as gold ; the neck claims some locks for its own, the ears divide others ; some play upon his forehead, some fall down his cheeks. There are two figures of Narcissus here and each shows a like beauty, save that the one stands out from the surrounding air, the other is sunk beneath the spring. By the standing water stands the boy with fixed gaze, all athirst for the loveliness before him.”

From the younger Philostratus comes *Marsyas*, a description which will bear comparison with Matthew Arnold’s poem :

“ The Phrygian has been beaten ; there is despair in his eyes for he realizes what will be his fate. He has piped for the last time ; full well he knows ; his boasts against Latona’s son have failed. His flute is flung down in disgrace ; never more will he play ; its weakness has been made manifest. He stands beside the pine tree wherefrom he knows that he will hang, flayed alive to make a wine skin, for that was the penalty which he adjudged against himself. He steals a look at the Scythian who is whetting the edge of his knife for him : (notice how the arms strain against the whetstone and the blade) and the savage looks back at Marsyas, his eyes agleam, his hair standing erect, rough and stiff. There is a red flush upon his cheek, as of one, methinks, who thirsts for blood ; his overhanging eyebrows are contracted in anger and give a touch of character to his fury. His lips have an angry snarl at the thought of what he is going to do, perhaps a snarl of joy, perhaps it is his heart swelling at the idea of murder. As for Apollo, he is pictured resting on a rock ; his harp lies by his left side and his left hand is still upon it, striking softly

and plucking now one string, now another. Note the God's quiet pose and the smile that lights up his face, and how his right hand rests near his bosom, gently holding the quill, lulled to quietude by the joy of victory. There is the river, too, soon to change its name ; and mark me lastly the band of Satyrs, their sorrow as plainly shown as their wanton love of movement, how they are depicted mourning for their dear Marsyas.'

### III

All this, it may be said, is mere literature. Of the frescoes that are described for us by Pausanias, of the pictures that roused the enthusiasm of Lucian and Philostratus, not a trace remains and we do not know what impression they would make on us to-day. The argument is true, and if we had no further information, the history of Greek painting might well be left in the decent obscurity where it usually resides. But the Greeks have had the same good fortune with their painting as with their music and their sculpture. In all three arts the fugitive has disappeared ; the colours of the fresco and the wood panels of the picture ; the strings of the lyre, the bronze and ivory of the flute ; the wax of the bust, even the marble of the statue, have all felt the carking tooth of time and faded away out of our reach. But there is an immortal element which has survived. The words of the music, which to the Greeks were more vital than the accompaniment, have come down to us in the pages of Aeschylus and Pindar. The art of the sculptor, all too scantily represented in the few mutilated statues that we possess, is more truly realised by the

incomparable coins of the Greek cities that survive in all their pristine beauty, as fresh and unsullied as when they left the mint. And Greek painting, usually regarded as a mere shadow of literary description, is a real and living joy in the wonderful vases which the Attic masters fired in their kilns and so fixed the colours for ever.

The discovery—and the appreciation—of these masterpieces has been one of the greatest services rendered by the youthful science of classical archaeology. Since the end of the eighteenth century, when they first began to be studied, more than fifty thousand vases have been brought to light.<sup>1</sup> The Louvre possesses six thousand, the British Museum five thousand, and there are almost as many at Naples and Berlin; the rest are scattered in innumerable public and private collections. We know the names of over eighty different artists who have affixed their signatures to their works; of one, Smikros, we have a self-portrait, a buxom youth reclining at a feast with his mistress on his knee. The scene is such an one as Utamaro loves to paint and the portrait is as authentic, and probably as lifelike, as many of those which grace the walls of the Pitti Palace at Florence. Generally potter and artist were different persons and we have two signatures, one "*made*," the other "*painted*" the vase; sometimes the potter or the artist signs alone. But beside the signed vases we have a very much larger number of anonymous designs, for there

<sup>1</sup> Sir William Hamilton, while at Naples, formed one of the first collections and it is from the Latin "*vasa*," "*vessels*," that our word comes.

was an intense corporate life in the two potters' quarters of Athens, and the tendency was to sink the individual in the school. Each of the great artists had his own definite style, which was closely imitated by his pupils and assistants, and often it is more satisfactory to say that such and such a vase is of the school of Euphronios or Douris than that it was executed by the master himself. The nearest parallel perhaps to the system under which all these artist-craftsmen worked, is to be found in mediaeval Japan. The colour prints of Utamaro, Hokusai, Hiroshige and many another eastern artist are the result of a similar corporate effort, and possess many of the same qualities of grace and simplicity, brightness and charm. In both cases the artist, Japanese and Greek, stood close to life and did not take himself too seriously: their work was their livelihood, their productions passed at once into the hands of their fellows; often their names were unknown; they achieved greatness without being great. Free and independent, they were trained from youth in the family tradition of design, and, technical skill once acquired, they were ready to draw upon the wealth of material about them.

To the Greek potter, the temple with its statues, the porches with their paintings, the crowded theatre and the busy market, all alike offered subjects for his brush: the male nude was to be seen at every wrestling school, while the licence of the banquet gave other opportunities to the artist's eye. The fresco painters on the other hand worked in the grand style: they decorated the porticoes and colonnades which were the meeting houses

and conventicles of a Greek state, and their work corresponds to the chapel paintings and altar pieces of the Italian Renaissance. The easel pictures of Zeuxis and Apelles belong to a different category : they were only to be bought by the rich, and witness to the decline of *national* art as plainly as do the gilt framed portents in a modern dining room. But in Greece, as later in Japan, the painters were the select aristocracy of art ; the potter and the print maker were the proletariat. The Greek vases were the possession of the people ; they are art popular and world-wide. They were exported to all the Mediterranean countries--examples have been found in South Russia, in North Africa, in Italy, and in France--and there can be little doubt that they passed with Alexander into Eastern Asia and brought with them there the vivifying influence of Greece. Just as Buddhism is an adaptation of Greek philosophy and Jujitsu a reflection of Greek wrestling, so the art of China and Japan drew its first inspiration from the Greek vases. There are differences, of course, but they are no more than must inevitably result from the influence of environment and national character.

In the sixth and fifth centuries B.C., nearly every Greek state had its own distinctive style. But although there were famous potteries at Corinth, Chalcis, Rhodes, Cyrene, and many of the Ionian cities, yet the finest vases, the red figured of the strong style, were pre-eminently an article of Athens, and were as typically Athenian as the owl coins which travelled with them wherever the Greek traders made their way.

The great days of the potter's art at Athens were the great days of Athens herself, those wonderful years at the end of the sixth and beginning of the fifth century, of which we know so little, when the state was forming and taking shape. The black figure vases belong to the period 600–500 B.C. Their first style represented by the “*François*” vase of Klitias and Ergotimos is contemporary with Solon; Amasis and Exekias lived under Pisistratus: Nikosthenes and his followers belong to the time of Cleisthenes. The red figure vases beginning with Nikosthenes have as their first great representative in the “severe” style, Epiktetos, who flourished B.C. 500; the “strong” style continues down to Brygos who was working in the years that followed Salamis and may have lived as late as 450 B.C. Within the short space of one man's life the technique of the craft in the red figure vases reached perfection. The gap between Epiktetos and Brygos, immense though it be in accomplishment—as great indeed as that between the early plays of Aeschylus and the Agamemnon—in actual years is very small. But progress then was in the air that men breathed: the new state that Solon had founded had shown its artistic power under Pisistratus; then came the stimulus of democracy and the fiery trial of the Persian Wars, and soon Athens was speeding along the road which ended in the glories of the Periclean age. The vases are some of the few memorials that we have of this, the spring time of the city's youth.

The archaic vases before B.C. 600 are of no great importance artistically. It was during the sixth

century, at Athens, that the first great step was made, in what we call the black figure vases. Somewhat conventional in their drawing, their grace of form and finish of execution soon brought fame to the Athenian potteries and they are the first products of that artistic skill which in the next century made Athens the school of Greece. The Chalcidian “Phineus” kylix is the first great work in the black figure style, but its chief monument is the celebrated François vase, now in the Museum at Florence. Discovered by Alexandre François, in 1844, in a tomb near Clusium it was then in fragments and some of the pieces have never been recovered. In its restored state, moreover, it was again in 1900 cruelly shattered by one of the museum keepers, who in a moment of invincible ennui threw a stool and broke it into six hundred and thirty-eight fragments. After two years' work it was again restored, and we are assured that it has rather gained than lost by the disaster. Signed by Ergotimos the potter, and Klitias the painter, and dating probably from the time of Solon at Athens, it is a large crater over two feet high and nearly six feet in circumference. There are ten separate pictures on the vase, two hundred and fifty figures, one hundred and twenty-eight inscriptions; the designs in five zones form, as has been said, a sort of illustrated Greek bible, a bible however not without comic elements, according to the usual law of Greek art which always refused to draw a strict line between the serious and the comic. The most important theme, in the centre zone running round the entire vase, is the procession

of the gods coming to the marriage feast of Peleus and Thetis ; below it on either side are two pictures, one the murder of Troilos by Achilles, the other the return of Hephaestos to heaven : above is another pair, the chariot race in honour of Patroklos and the contest between the Centaurs and the Lapithae. The top zone of all, which is the best preserved, has on one side the hunting of the Calydonian boar, on the other the victory of Theseus over the Minotaur ; the lowest zone is a series of contests between animals, lions and bulls, panthers and stags. Lastly on the very foot of the vase there is a frieze, "The Fight between the Pigmies and the Cranes," where the comic verve of the artist, visible already in many details of the more serious pictures, finds full play. The execution is, of course, archaic, but we see already the essential qualities of the Attic genius. Klitias, although he is still fettered by the convention of clothed figures, has plainly a lively perception of the beauties of the nude : his drawing though hard is correct ; the angular outlines give the exact proportion of the limbs, and he can indicate motion with a wonderful freedom and vivacity.

To Klitias belongs the honour of this masterpiece, but Amasis and Exekias his younger contemporaries are fully his equals and the cups that issued from their workshops, such as the "Satyrs at the wine press," and the "Dionysus in a boat," the designs gradually changing from the old fashion of processional lines to the concentration of interest on single figures, reach perfection as far as the limitations of the black figure allow.

But the method itself was unsatisfactory : based on nature though it is—for the observation of the shadows thrown by the sun was probably the beginning of its development—it has all the disadvantages of the silhouette, and renders impossible the variety of modelling and inflexion of relief which the painting of the nude demands. Touches of red, white, and violet, were sometimes used but they generally failed to adhere to the black varnish ; finally an attempt was made by the use of engraver's tools to rectify the weakness of the painter's brush. It was not altogether successful and at last the difficulty was solved—by Nikosthenes perhaps or Andokides—through the simple expedient of reversal. Instead of painting black designs upon a red background, the natural colour of the red clay was left for the figure and the rest of the vase was painted black. The painter had only to dip his brush in the black varnish, using it now thick and full, now weakened by dilution and tending to brown or red. A line, more or less firm or light, painted on the red clay could indicate muscles, sinews, and the finest folds of drapery, while touches of violet and white were sparingly used to diversify the effect. Such are the red figure vases, the crown and triumph of Athenian pottery, which began to be made about 520 B.C. and reached perfection in the period between 500 and 450.

The material of which these vases was made was a special clay found near Cape Colias on the coast of Attica, mixed with a certain red ochre which came from the Island of Ceos and was reserved by fixed convention for the Athenian

potteries. The fundamental colours used were but three, black, white, and red ; the red a clayey ochre coloured by peroxyde of iron, the white quite probably the substance we call caolin. The black with its beautiful lustre was by far the most important ; its composition is a secret not yet discovered, and it takes varying tones of red and yellow according to its thickness and exposure to the fire.

After the clay had been shaped by the potter's wheel, it was dried and polished, and then the painter proceeded to his task. As to the brush which permitted the Athenian artist to trace those lines so firm, so bold, and yet so fine, there has been considerable discussion. Some connoisseurs have supposed a brush composed of pigs' bristles, with one long projecting bristle for the finer touches : others with greater probability prefer the natural brush—*penna dei pittori*—which is formed by the one small feather which the woodcock has hidden under his wing. When the design was executed the vase was fired in the kiln and finally the outer surface was dipped in a bath of glaze, whose composition again is unknown, which gave to the vessel that velvety gloss which is the despair of the modern potter.

The vases were of different shapes but they all combined utility with beauty. The *lecythos* was a slender vessel used for holding oil and was especially frequent as a funeral offering. But most of the vases had a more convivial use. There was the *amphora*, the two handed vessel used to carry the wine from the cask to the table, the favourite type with the black figure potters ;

the *crater*, a wide bowl in which the wine was mixed with water ; the *cyathos*, a jug into which the wine was transferred before it was poured into the cup. The cup itself had many shapes ; *kylix*, *skyphos*, *kantharos*, *phiale*, *kotyle*, *rhyton*, are but a few of the names which fill the learned pages of Atheneus. In the great period of the red figure style, the cup was the favourite vessel with potters and the men who worked in this style have left innumerable masterpieces. Epiktetos, Kachrylion, Euthymides, Phintias, Oltos, Hieron, Macron, Sosias, Peithinos, Smikros, Skythes, Andokides, Chelis, Euergides are some of the names of potters and painters inscribed upon the clay, but the number of anonymous artists is much greater and the chief English authority on ceramics, Mr. J. D. Beazley, has recently identified by stylistic details more than fifty different nameless painters.

- To discuss their individual achievement would be a long task. Here it must suffice to give a brief account of three of the greatest artists, Euphronios, Brygos and Douris, who were all producing at Athens in the period 500-470 B.C.

Of Euphronios, one of the few pure Attic names in the list, we have a little more personal knowledge than of most. A stone base has been found on the Acropolis recording a dedication that he made to Athene : it is at least probable that he is himself the potter figured on a stèle as offering two cups to the goddess ; lastly on a vase of Euthymides the latter after his own signature adds the words *ως οὐδέποτε Ευφρόνιος*, "Euphronios never did as well as this." In his long and busy

life he developed two manners so distinct one from the other that some critics, without much reason, have supposed two artists bearing the same name. Of his first style the best example is the vase now in the Louvre, inspired perhaps by a fresco of Micon, "The Young Theseus Receiving the Ring of Minos from Amphitrite in the presence of Athene." The design is full of youthful charm and gives an impression similar to that which we receive from the frescoes of the early Tuscan painters, a Giotto or a Fra Angelico. Athene fills the centre of the picture; the young hero stands facing the sea goddess; with his modest air and slender limbs a living image of the first flower of youth. Very different is the artist's second manner, as we find it in the "Fête galante" at the British Museum, or the "Contest between Heracles and Antaeus" at the Louvre. Here realism has triumphed and we have a scene of the fiercest violence; the hero grappling with the giant whose mouth opens to emit a cry of anguish while the fingers of his right hand, most wonderfully drawn, are clutched in the agony of death. A similar scene, but here approaching almost to caricature, is depicted on the Petrograd cup, a group of Athenians engaging in a drunken brawl. Their faces are vulgar and ugly, their gestures repulsive, but the painter's skill is superb; the scene is like a kermesse of Teniers', even as the Petrograd psykter, with its wonderful group of four nude women drinking, recalls by its robust figures the healthy animalism of the other Flemish master who painted for us the Judgment of Paris.

All the vase painters are realists, in some cases

ultra-realists with a suspicion of grossness ; but Brygos (or rather the Brygos painter, for Brygos himself was only the proprietor of the atelier) had a rather conspicuous liking for subjects that modern taste would reject. Like Parrhasios, some of whose pictures adorned the secret museum of the Emperor Tiberius, and Giulio Romano who prostituted his genius to the level of Aretino's sonnets, Brygos' designs occasionally overstep the limit of the permissible, and there is in him a touch of that morbid sensuality which so often mars the work of one of the most Greek of all English artists, Aubrey Beardsley. But in spite of this he is a very great master and above all others the painter of movement. With him all traces of archaism have disappeared and we see the full maturity of art. Such a design as the cup in the British Museum "Sileni attacking Hera and Iris," shows a perfect mastery of line and a satirical humour which is peculiarly Brygos' own. Whether the subject is the painter's invention or a reminiscence of the comic stage is uncertain, but as a piece of drawing it is perfect, and the nude figure of the Silenus leaping across the altar to seize the flying maiden is a marvel of foreshortening. Of a more serious type is the great cup in the Louvre, "The Taking of Troy," where, in scene upon scene, we have depicted by a master's brush the episodes of that terrible last night. Realism pushed to the extreme limit of the terrible ;—it is the method of Goya in his "Caprices" and "Prisoners." Goya is the father of modern impressionism, but his two pictures in the Prado, the "Maja desnuda" and the "Maja

*vestida*," have an exact parallel in the pair of anonymous vases found at Gela, and Brygos both in his serious and in his lighter style can stand comparison with the great Spaniard.

Euphronios and the Brygos painter have their ardent admirers but they have their detractors. Douris is a more impeccable artist, the Raphael of vase painters, and there is as much difference between his early work, where he follows the archaic conventions of Epiktetos, and his later masterpieces, as there is between the little pictures that Raphael executed at Perugia and the sublime figures of prophets and sibyls that adorn the church of Santa Maria in Rome. We possess more than thirty of Douris' signed vases and a large number of others, which though unsigned, are almost certainly by his hand. The nude male figure he represents freely, the female nude scarcely ever ; but his women's heads are some of his most characteristic work. As with most of the vase painters his subjects fall into three groups, depicting either adventures of gods and heroes, or combats and arming of warriors, or scenes of familiar life.

To the first class belongs the fine cup in the Louvre, "The Contest between Menelaus and Paris"; where every detail of muscular anatomy, every ornament of helmet and cuirass is reproduced with the most scrupulous fidelity. The figures have all the vigour of life and stand out with wonderful clearness from the black lustre of the vase. "The Exploits of Theseus" in the British Museum is another marvel in this style,

and so again is the large bowl “The combat between Heracles and the Amazons.” No less than seven cups deal with preparations for battle, and they form a fine if somewhat monotonous series. More graceful are the scenes of everyday life such as “The Youth with the Hare,” and the delightful picture of the ravished bride in the arms of—

“ the amorous king  
who comes home nightly, laden  
underneath his broad bat wing  
with a gentle, mortal maiden.”

But the masterpiece of Douris is the “Memnon and Eos,” now in the Louvre. The picture is small—there are only two figures—but it is one of the most beautiful that antiquity has left us. Eos, the goddess of dawn, stands erect, her wings open, while with straining arms she supports the rigid corpse of her dead son. The goddess is now no more than a mother, heartbroken at her darling’s death, as she fixes one long last look upon the dear face that she will soon see no more. The hero’s body is naked, for Achilles has despoiled him of shield and cuirass; the legs are stiff, the left foot bent in the agony of death, the arms hang helpless. The picture is a true Pietà such as Mantegna or Francia might paint; the disordered hair, the fine beard, the closed eyes, every detail recalls those visions of the dead Christ, which have for so many centuries touched the hearts of believers.

Douris, Euphronios, and Brygos composed almost entirely in the red figure style, and the

large majority of the Attic vases in our collections are either black or red figured. But there is a small yet most important class of vases with coloured figures on a white ground, which also show most plainly the influence of Polygnotos. The technique was not unknown to the masters of the red figure and some cups worked thus on a white ground are undoubtedly of their production. The well known "Aphrodite Riding on a Goose," which is now in the British Museum is probably by Euphronios; the wonderful Maenad with thyrsus and panther at Munich is with even more certainty attributed to Brygos. But in the first great period of the potter's art, Sotades was the only artist who seems to have preferred the white background and his work bears plain signs of the coming decadence. He works for patrons a little blasé and by strangeness of subject and eccentricity of style he tries to rekindle their enthusiasm; his designs, fine though they be, lack simplicity and for the best examples of the white ground vases we have to go to the funeral lecythi which date from 450 to the end of the fourth century.

In some ways these vases are the most beautiful of the whole series and their purity of design entitles them to be put side by side with the finest sculptures of Phidias. But the potter's workmanship is inferior and they are often sadly mutilated; the white glaze has broken away destroying the colours with it and the rough clay underneath is visible. Moreover they are few in number and unsigned, so that in spite of all their charm it is to the black and red figure vases that we must turn for our clearest impressions. These at any

rate are immortal and have hardly felt the ravages of time. Fresh and bright, the colours and the outlines are as perfect as when they were designed over two thousand years ago and for us the vase-room at the British Museum can still be a true picture gallery of ancient art.



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